LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

JOHN PATERSON STRUTHERS

Yours affectionately

J. P. Struthers.

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OF

JOHN PATERSON STRUTHERS, M.A.

LATE MINISTER OF GREENOCK REFORMED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

EDITED AND ILLUSTRATED BY

A. L. STRUTHERS

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TO

THE MEMBERS, LOVING AND BELOVED, OF

THE GREENOCK REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THIS MEMORIAL OF THEIR MINISTER, 1882-1915

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

PREFACE

I HAVE been asked by many to tell something more of my husband's life than has already been told, and so worthily told, by the Rev. Thomas Cassels, M.A., in *Men of the Knotted Heart*. I have thought that a collection of his letters would give the truest picture of his individuality and work. To those who have helped me to carry out my plan by allowing me to use freely the letters they have kept, I am very grateful; also to my friends, Rev. A. C. Gregg, B.D., and Mrs. Gregg, of the Reformed Presbyterian Manse, Loanhead, who have greatly aided me in my work. I know these letters do not form a complete picture. There are gaps in time, while very important incidents in my husband's life, and even some of his dear friends, are not spoken of; but the fact that so many letters have been kept—and, it seems to me, very lovingly kept—for forty years, has something to tell of the place he had in the esteem and affection of others.

I have included with the letters some biographical notes and explanatory statements, and have added a few selections from his other miscellaneous writings.

Although full of great interests, his life was not unusually eventful. At different times, after becoming a minister, he was urged to go to Africa, America, and Australia, but he had not a moment's hesitation in

refusing. He remained by the people in Greenock who had chosen him to be their minister, and to the last gave them, and the town of his adoption, of his best. Perhaps for this very reason this volume may prove helpful. We read with interest and profit of the lives of men who have been great leaders in things national and ecclesiastical, but they seem very far away from us. The record of one who wrote towards the close of his life, 'I have worked—I hope I can say "worked" in some measure truly—quietly away, but I have wrought no deliverance on the earth,' may come closer to us; and that it may be an encouragement and inspiration to some in the ordinary ministries of daily life is the hope in which the present book has been prepared.

The passing from this life of three of my husband's early friends since the date at which they contributed towards this collection the letters they had received from him has made the closing part of my work a still more solemn and sacred task. Sir William Ramsay, the Rev. John Rutherford, and Principal Denney have, while facing that fateful sixty-third year of life, been called from work to which each was devoting all his powers of heart and intellect, and to which each seemed indispensable. While to us left behind there has come a great sense of loneliness and loss, they have passed into that clearer 'light of friendship,' of which that of earth is but the dawning ray.

A. L. S.

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CHAPTER I

THE HERITAGE OF A GODLY ANCESTRY

'My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise,—
The son of parents passed into the skies.'

COWPER.

IF lacking somewhat in euphony, there is doubtless truth in the lines—

Since Snaw was Snaw and Grass was Grass,
There were Craigs in Park and Flemings in Knockglass,
Watts in the Cladeng and Struthers in the Skeach.

Such folk-sayings are generally true. It certainly is the case that my husband's people lived for many generations in, or near, the 'Skeach,'[1] a district in the parish of East Kilbride, Lanarkshire. Of no patrician birth, those forefathers were apparently of unblemished character. The manner of men they were may best be judged by what they themselves have written. In the January number of the *Morning Watch*, 1901, my husband printed a facsimile of one 'half-leaf' of his grandfather's Diary, to which our present grave circumstances of war and food problems add a new interest. The article, with the quotation, is as follows :—

"'ὃ γέγραφα γέγραφα'

Hŏ gĕgrapha gĕgrapha

'What I have written, I have written.'—JOHN xix. 22.

"The highest point in Barometers long ago was sometimes marked not *Very Fine* or *Settled* as with us, but

[1] The Gaelic word for the hawthorn fruit.

Serene. Perhaps it was from that that men borrowed the phrase they used when things were going well and looking well with them—*All serene.* In the writing on this 'half-leaf' the Barometer stands all through at *Very Low*:—

FOREFAULDS, *Decbr.* 31, 1800.

This day ends the present year and the 18*th Century, famous for commencing and ending with dearth and scarcity; the first year of it being the last of* 7 *years' famine, the present being the* 2*nd of dearth in succession. The last began with uncommon cold and barrenness, so that we had no Spring till the month of June, in which there was a few warm days, and then rain almost without intermission till Martinmas. Meal rose gradually through the summer from* 13*d. to* 20*d. per peck. From Harvest to New Year's day it rose to* 2 *shillings, and quickly after that to* 3*sh. &* 6*d., and in some places to* 4*sh. the peck. Barley meal being* 2/3*d. and pease meal* 2/10*d. Potatoes* 2/ *per peck. This present year, after a very dry winter, opened with a fine Spring. Summer was cold in the beginning, but turned very warm and the greatest drought in the memory of man. Scarcely any rain fell from Seedtime till Harvest. Most of Springs failed, and great distress for water ensued. The Crop was unproductive, and Markets that had fallen a little before Harvest immediately rose again, and this* 31 *of Decbr. the meal is at* 3/ *per peck, Barley & Pease Meal at* 2/, *and Potatoes at* 1/6. *And trade of all kinds 'very low.'*

"These words were written by my grandfather, then a young man, in the little cottage in which he was born, in the parish of East Kilbride. They are copied from the solitary half-leaf which survives of a private journal which he kept. I have produced them in facsimile, partly because they have been strangely preserved, and you may be none the worse of seeing, at such a time as this, how strangely a little record may live and leap to light. Priceless manuscripts and stupendous palaces and great empires have come into being and disappeared within these hundred years, and a little scrap of paper has outlived them all. They may be interesting also to some of you who are little housekeepers and run your mothers' errands. Only you will have to find out what a peck is, or rather was. In those days, and for long after, they measured

many things by bulk and not by weight, and people understood better than we the meaning of the words—'good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over'—which is the kind of measure God gives Himself and loves to see us give.

"The man who wrote that Diary was evidently not one of those who were gorgeously apparelled and lived delicately. The price of pease-meal does not concern the dwellers in kings' courts. But he was one who feared God from his youth up, and though he had his own battle to fight, I know that if a writing could come to us now from him he would say that promise had been fulfilled to him—'He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.' Nor do I think that even his darkest day would be wholly dark. What came after —'and trade of all kinds very low'—I can't tell, but on the other side of the leaf are words which plainly contain directions which he had either seen or heard, or drawn up for himself, as to the way in which one should enter into personal covenant with God.

. . . 2. *That it must be done with suitable engagement of spirit.* 3. *That it must be done as an act of obedience to the will of God and as it is His Will.* 4. *That it must be done in conformity to the law of Christ and not to the law as a covenant.* 5. *That it must be done in the faith of God's reconciled character.* 6. *That it must be done in dependence upon Jesus Christ.* 7. *That it must be done from principles of Love to a Three-One God.* 8. *And lastly, that it must be done with a single eye to the glory of God as its ultimate scope and end.*

(*Signed*) *WILLIAM STRUTHERS.*

May all that may remain for any length of time of your handwriting or of mine be half as worthy."

In the same cottage of Forefaulds (as recorded in his mother's Bible) was born on July 18, 1776, another son, John Struthers, who has left a much fuller record than his brother William. As a child he was delicate

and unable to join in the boisterous pastimes of other children. Before he was seven years of age his mother taught him to read and write, while he also had a kind friend in Mrs. Baillie, widow of Dr. James Baillie, late Professor of Theology in the College of Glasgow, who, with her two daughters, the younger being Joanna Baillie, afterwards the poetess, lived at that time at Longcalderwood. Mrs. Baillie frequently had the ailing child brought to her, read to him, and made him read to herself. These were happy days, but the time came too soon when Mrs. Baillie went to London to be near her son, Dr. Matthew Baillie, and her two brothers, the celebrated Drs. William and John Hunter. The 'Meikle House' and its garden, supposed by the enthusiastic boy to be the finest things of their kind in the whole world, were shut up, but were ever remembered as the very beau-ideal of a country home.

This John Struthers has told the story of his own life. When at school he was a favourite with the master, who frequently convoyed him home at night, and oftener than once recommended his father, as a matter of duty and of hopeful promise, to bestow on him a classical education. This, however, did not comport with the plan of life which the worthy man had already formed for his son's adoption; neither did it comport altogether with his idea of the social state, to the well-being of which he reckoned the apostolic precept, 'Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called,' to be of great and permanent importance. Satisfied himself with the station he held in the social circle, he considered it to be the duty of all men, especially of Christian men, to be the same. Far from sympathising with the rage for 'rising in the world,' which even then

began to be pretty widely felt, he considered it to be the most alarming indication of the want of moral principle and the utter decay of religious feeling; and he frequently predicted that ultimately in the righteous judgment of God it would be the means of dissolving our social condition both civil and ecclesiastical. In his *Autobiography*, John Struthers draws, with filial reverence, a vivid portraiture of his father and mother. He says:—

"That father talked very little about anything, and of his Christianity, if possible, still less; but he lived the Christian to a degree of perfection unimaginable to all but such as were the daily witnesses of it, and the participators of the blessings daily flowing therefrom to all who lived within the sphere of its influence. His piety was pure, earnest and steady, but always unobtrusive, and its depth known only to God and the inmates of his own house. He has been dead for nearly forty years,[1] but is still remembered in the neighbourhood for the simplicity of his manner and the uprightness of his character. His helpmate was equally pious with himself, though perhaps with a little more leaning towards the things of the world; she, too, is still remembered and spoken of as a woman of more than ordinary energy both of body and mind. That mother in her instructions and admonitions was unceasing, and the ardency of her prayers no language and no manner but her own could adequately express. Whether the effect of these prayers was equal to their fervour it would perhaps be presumption to say, but it was certainly very great. Many were the anxiously inquiring hours, and not a few the sleepless nights, by which they were followed; and through a long, considerably varied, and sometimes not a little troubled life, their remembrance has broken many a snare and dissipated delusive visions not a few."

[1] He died in 1801.

When he was nine years of age, John Struthers went to live with his grandmother, then a widow, on a small farm owned by her in the neighbouring parish of Glassford, which he thus describes :—

"Standing not far from the summit of a rising ground it commanded a most extensive prospect to the northward, bounded by the hills of Cowal, Ben Lomond, the Lennox Fells, and the Ochils, here and there interspersed with snowy peaks still more distant, the very names of which were to us and to all in the neighbourhood utterly unknown. The foreground of the landscape was bare, bleak, and barren in the extreme, consisting for the most part of black bog moss, thinly sprinkled with hillocks of gray fog and patches of stunted heather and at times white with cannach heads, but the distance rose alternately into beauty and grandeur, terminating, especially in the north, in the true sublime."

Here he spent three and a half years, almost cut off from the living world, in summer looking after the cows, and in winter, the sheep. He pictures his surroundings with remarkable vividness :—

"Perhaps no period of my after life has passed with less of what is called ennui, or weariness of existence. I found at all times, amidst the deep solitude that surrounded me, by listening to the music of the season, abundant amusement. In no situation does the lark sing earlier or sweeter than in these upland heights. The merle and the mavis then had in that quarter no shelter and, of course, were not commonly heard, but the cuckoo was always there early, the 'wheeple of the whaup' was seldom wanting, nor the bitter and perpetually reiterated skirl of the peaseweep, the scraigh of the paitrick, the birr of the moorcock, or the rusty risp of the corncraik. In defect of all these the winds of every part of the year have their appropriate tones, strongly felt by all

who have ears attuned, or nerves strung, to the ordinary sensibilities of nature. Even where these may be less delicate, there are the ever-shifting aspects of the heavens and the earth, the vicissitudes of the changeful year, upon which no eye can be turned without awakening strong and heartfelt emotions, which, having been once carefully observed, and fully felt, the remembrance of them is a feast through life, and a rich and inexhaustible reversion for the childhood that returns with old age."

During these three years he had access to his grandfather's library, which contained numerous controversial works connected with the Scottish Reformation. The histories by Wodrow, Knox, and Calderwood; *The History of the Indulgence, An Apologetical Relation, Naphtali, A Hind let Loose, Causes of the Lord's Wrath, The Banders Disbanded, A Cup of Cold Water, Grapes of Eshcol, Bundle of Myrrh, An Informatory Vindication,* etc., all of which he not only carefully perused by himself again and again, but read aloud to his grandmother during the long winter evenings, when they were generally left in the house by themselves. This aged relative was a truly pious woman and more than ordinarily well informed. Her family having been implicated in the dreadful doings of the times dealt with in the literature just mentioned, she took an interest almost personal in many of the scenes narrated, which often derived additional importance from the traditional anecdotes she could tell concerning them.[1]

[1] John Struthers of East Kilbride was one of the twelve hundred prisoners taken at the battle of Bothwell Bridge, 22nd June 1679, who were marched to Edinburgh, tied two and two, and who, as the prisons were too small, were confined in the open air in the Greyfriars churchyard. By November many had died and some had escaped, only two hundred and fifty-seven remaining. Without warning these were marched early one morning to Leith, and put on board a vessel named the *Crown*. They had scarcely room to move. 'Our uneasiness,' wrote one of them, James Corson, 'is

While still a lad, John Struthers was apprenticed by his father to the trade of shoemaking, but his heart lay in the reading and writing of books. It seems to have been ever his habit to read at meal-time. At every meal his book was on the table, and so long as he continued to eat he continued to read. At the close of his work for the day he resumed his book, and it was no uncommon thing for the morning sun to find him with his book, exactly as it had left him the previous evening, unconscious that the night had passed away. For the last fifteen years of his life he held the very congenial post of Librarian to the Stirling Library, Glasgow.

As well as the account of his life, John Struthers wrote a *History of Scotland*, from the Union, in 1707, to the year 1827; and some biographical essays, the greater number of which were ultimately transferred to Chambers's *Lives of Eminent Scotsmen*; while from time to time he published poems occupying several volumes.

A letter has been preserved which throws a strong sidelight on this *Autobiography*. It is from Norman Macleod, then minister of Dalkeith, two years before he was called to the Barony Church, Glasgow. It is not dated, but the envelope is stamped 'Dalkeith, August 10, 1850.'

beyond words. Yet the consolations of God overbalance all. I hope we are near our port and Heaven is open for us.' The ship encountered a storm, and was dashed to pieces on the rocks off the coast of Orkney. Two hundred of the prisoners were drowned, the captain having chained the hatches down to prevent them escaping from the hold. A monument was erected to their memory at Deerness, in Mainland, the Orkneys. It bears this inscription:

'For Christ, His Crown, and Covenant. Erected by public subscription to the memory of 200 Covenanters, who were taken prisoners at the Battle of Bothwell Bridge, and sentenced to Transportation for life, but who perished by shipwreck near this spot, 10 December 1679.'

To Mr. John Struthers

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I shall rejoice to see you. I would *prefer* Friday *night*. I am all alone, and I like a night talk. You may, however, 'Wander by the burnie's side' all day long if you please. But come *to breakfast* rather than not at all.

Your *Autobiography* made me laugh and weep time about. It is quite delicious. I know not when I have been more truly delighted.—Ever yours affec.

N. MACLEOD.

In the *Life of Dr. Norman Macleod*, written by his brother, the Rev. Donald Macleod, I find the following:—

"There were other men, besides Arnold and Campbell, who more or less influenced his views at this time. There was Struthers, the author of *The Sabbath*—a rare specimen of the old Scotch Covenanter, stern but tender, of keen intellect and unbending principle, and full of contempt for the nineteenth century. Norman took great delight in exciting Struthers to talk on some congenial theme, to describe, with shrill voice and pithy Scotch, the good old days, to denounce with indignation the degeneracies and backslidings of modern times, to anathematise Voluntaryism as practical atheism, and declare Sabbath schools 'the greatest curse the Almighty ever sent to this covenanted land—undermining family life and destroying the parental tie.' If there was exaggeration there was also good sense in many of Struthers' reflections, especially as to the past and present of the working classes."

Writing to J. C. Shairp, whom he had asked to review the *Autobiography*, Norman Macleod says:—

"The feature I wished you to delineate was that manly independence, that Godly simplicity of the peasant saint,

which is so beautiful. . . . He is a genuine *man*, and as perfect a specimen of a class of Scotchmen passing away (and soon to be driven off the road like the old coaches by steam) as the pibroch is a specimen of old music or the small bog myrtle of a Highland scene."

Strangely, my husband did not possess a copy of his granduncle's *Life*, although always anxious to do so, till on one occasion, when visiting Leeds, he was passing along a street with his host, and coming on a second-hand bookstall, stopped, saying, 'Wait a minute; I wish to see what kind of books the people of Leeds read,' and his eye fell on *Struthers' Poetical Works with Autobiography* (2 vols.).

The themes of these poetical works are such as one who was an ardent lover of nature, and of Scotland with her time-hallowed institutions and her peasant folk, would choose. 'The Poor Man's Sabbath' is a poem of one hundred and two stanzas. Others are: 'The Plough,' 'The Winter Day,' 'To the Blackbird.' They were written for pleasure. To quote their author: 'The composing of them soothed, softened, and cheered the toils and troubles of youth, and the revising of them has contributed to lighten some dreary hours of approaching old age darkened by the clouds of irremediable sorrow.' They did not bring him wealth, but they secured for him the friendship and confidence through life of some great and good men. One only need be named. The friend of his childhood, Joanna Baillie, whose playing on a spinet in the old drawing-room of Longcalderwood House was one of his earliest memories, introduced 'The Poor Man's Sabbath' to Walter Scott, and at his request Mr. Archibald Constable undertook the publishing of a new edition, the fourth. Mr. Constable—to use John Struthers' own words—'treated him with the

dignity of a prince, sweetened by the complacency of the perfect gentleman, while in Sir Walter he at once discovered a frank and open heart, an unclouded understanding, and a benevolence that embraced the world. He never was in Edinburgh without having an interview with the great author in his house in North Castle Street, and every one of those interviews gave him a higher degree of enjoyment than the £30 that Mr. Constable had put into his pocket.'

That this feeling of regard was in some measure reciprocated may be gathered from what Lockhart says in his *Life of Scott*. Writing in 1838, he speaks of the author of 'The Poor Man's Sabbath' as 'a man of rare worth and very considerable genius; one of the very few that have had sense and fortitude to resist the innumerable temptations to which any measure of celebrity exposes persons of their class. I believe Mr. Struthers still survives to enjoy the retrospect of a long and virtuous life. His letters to Scott are equally creditable to his taste and his feelings, and some time after we shall find him making a pilgrimage of gratitude to Ashestiel.' As to this pilgrimage, however, Scott's biographer must have been mistaken. Although repeatedly invited to both Ashestiel and Abbotsford, John Struthers records that he never availed himself of this courtesy, and that he had seen neither place.

Some of the scenes of his early childhood are very lovingly pictured in his lesser poems. Of the garden of Longcalderwood House he writes:—

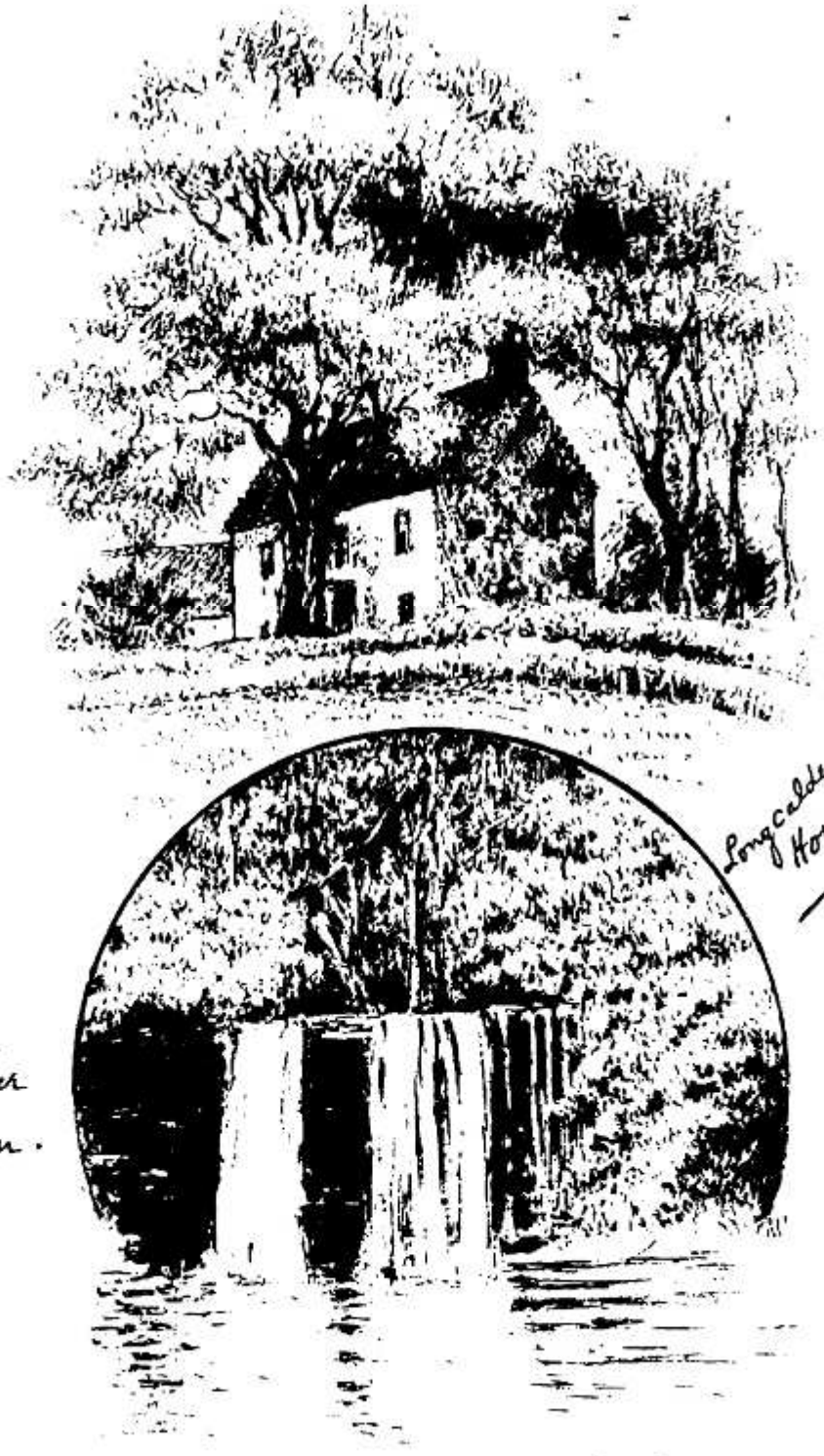
> There first upon my infant eye
> It burst, the glittering butterfly—
> There first I heard the busy bees
> At work upon thy broad plane-trees;

There watched the swallows, twittering, gay,
As by degrees their home of clay,
Careful with talons, breast, and bill,
They fixed beneath the window-sill,
While chirrup'd o'er them from the eaves
The sparrows—and beneath the leaves
Of the smooth beech hid from the sun,
Entranced, a rich, a happy one,
I saw the mirly mavis rest
Within her snug and cozie nest.

Also of the river Calder :—

Calder! upon thy blooming braes,
Sweet they were spent my early days;
And on thy bank, first caught my view
The blushing daisy bathed in dew.
Oft have I marked with wintry rains
Thee swoln across th' adjoining plains,
And blest myself, with secret pride,
The world had no such flood beside.
Our childish views but seldom last!
That dream with other dreams hath past,
Yet, Calder, still thou art to me
The loveliest stream that seeks the sea.

Since those early days nearly a century and a half have passed away. The Calder still murmurs on through its romantic glen. The old house of Long-calderwood, still with its encircling swallows, is but little changed. A tablet on its outer wall records that here was the birthplace of William and John Hunter, 'Pre-eminent in Medicine and Surgery.' It is men who have come and gone, and the place that knew them knows them no more. But whether their names be remembered or utterly forgot, their works do follow them.



Longcalderwood House.

In Calder Glen.

CHAPTER II

HOME AND SCHOOL DAYS

'The history of a man's childhood is the description of his parents and environment; this is his inarticulate but highly important history, in those first times while of articulate he has yet none.'—CARLYLE'S *Life of John Sterling.*

WILLIAM STRUTHERS, my husband's father, and son of the writer of the 'half-leaf' of the Diary already referred to, was married twice. The name of his first wife was Elspeth Crichton. Left a widower with one son, he married, in 1849, Mary Paterson. Their only son, John Paterson Struthers, was born on April 8, 1851, in Glasgow. Mary Paterson's home had been in East Linton, Haddingtonshire. She remembered 'little Jeannie Welsh,' afterwards Mrs. Carlyle, and numbered among her friends the Misses Donaldson, of Comely Bank—Miss Jess, Miss Jean, and Miss Catherine—so often mentioned in the Carlyle *Letters.* A pair of scarlet knitted baby-boots, sent by them to her with good wishes on the birth of her son, have been kept. They must have been considered too precious for ordinary use, for after the lapse of sixty-five years they look to-day as if they had just come off the needles.

The following gleanings from my husband's letters, written in later years, give a fairly vivid picture of his early home. That home certainly presented some strange contrasts. With rigid economy was combined extraordinary generosity. The father was stern and

of few words; the mother clever, resourceful, and, though quick-tempered, bubbling over with fun from morning to night. Apparently the parental discipline included very frequent recourse to the rod of correction, and there was little—if any—kissing; but all four members of the home cherished a secret admiration for each other's good qualities and capabilities, and, albeit unexpressed in words, the love that bound them together was very deep and strong. To these gleanings is added a 'Recollection,' written and sent from a far country by one of the few survivors who can recall those school and college days. It tells of some things of which no mention is made in my husband's letters.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

"My father was always very quiet, stiff in speech as in writing, weighing his words well, and very severe on all heresies and heretics. My mother was fond of talking and jesting. She thrashed me regularly, my father almost never. He always took me apart on Sabbath evening and prayed with me. My mother talked about God all day long and never spoke without quoting Scripture, but always very reverently. I naturally thought in Scripture words, and afterwards, when I was a lad, it was counted by some to be profane. There never was any display of love-making in our home—never such a thing as a birthday present. I once asked why there was no dumpling on our birthdays as in other houses, and I narrowly escaped a thrashing for asking. We *never* went to any place of entertainment. We played draughts and marbles at home in the evenings. My only toys as a child were clothes-pins: pulpits I was great at. My mother made the only ball I ever had. I think we were too austerely brought up."

"Ducking for apples! In our house! You dear goose! I didn't know it was near Hallowe'en, though I have

noticed false-faces in the windows of late. I ducked twice for them when I was a boy in the High School, being invited by one of my schoolfellows to his home. But 'nary' a nut or apple was ever to be seen in my father's house then. I never even got a turnip to howk and make merry with my friends—but I got something far better, though I did envy boys with theirs and their bits of candles, and can smell them at this distance of eight-and-twenty years."

"When I was a boy I told lies badly once or twice (that means more than twice!) and was soundly thrashed by my mother. I once fielded at cricket for three or four hours when I had been sent on an errand. Got no thanks for it. Told my mother when I got home that a policeman had sent me for some laudanum to David P. Walker, a chemist in New City Road. So my mother just went off with me to the shop. The man said 'No.' I said it was another David P. Walker. 'There 's no other with such a name' (I can see her face yet); and then I was marched home and thrashed and thrashed. I would be about eight at the time. I don't remember telling a lie after that."

"When I was at school one of our teachers was a Mr. George Ballardie. His father, I imagine, it must have been who is mentioned as one of Dr. Chalmers' most intimate Glasgow friends. The family, from the name, one would judge to be of French origin. Be that as it may, I remember Mr. Ballardie by his blue eyes and his quick step, and the swift gesture with which he hung up and took down his red college cloak. It was understood he was going to be a minister. He was a most beautiful reader, and, if we had done our work well, used to reward us on Friday afternoons by reciting eloquent passages from a school-book much used in those days, called *M'Culloch's Course of Reading*.

"But there is another day I remember very vividly. We were at our writing-lesson. A senior boy who sat opposite me on the other side of the desk, doing bookkeeping, struck me on the head with a heavy black ruler. I suppose it was partly in fun, but it made me angry, and in my passion I struck back. Mr. Ballardie turned round at the moment and caught me in the very act, and almost before I knew what had happened I was getting a thrashing and giving him impudence.

"When I got home my mother saw that something had gone wrong, and presently I told her all. Then, to my astonishment, she rose and, bringing pen and ink and a sheet of paper and an envelope and a 'Queen's head,' as we called a postage stamp in those days, bade me sit down and write a letter of apology to my teacher. I stoutly refused, but she simply said—'You don't rise off that seat till you have written that letter.' I cried long and bitterly, but at last I had to yield. It is a long time ago since then, but I have not forgotten what I wrote.

'Mr. Ballardie,

'SIR,—I am sorry I was impertinent to-day, and my mother hopes you will forgive me.—I am, Sir, Your obedient pupil.'

"A month or two afterwards Mr. Ballardie bade us all good-bye one day. His eyesight was threatening to give way, and he was going to Ceylon. That night he sent me *Sandford and Merton*, with my name and these words on the fly-leaf: 'From his affectionate teacher, George Ballardie. Numbers vi. 24, 25, 26.' The passage in Numbers is what is known as Aaron's Benediction.

"Many years after I was standing with two companions on a day in January on the top of Pedrotallagalla, the highest mountain in Ceylon—it reaches a height of over 8000 feet—when we were joined by a man who told us he was going home to Britain next day after fifteen years' absence. It was his first ascent of Pedro, and he didn't

like to go away without having climbed it. As we were talking, we saw a bramble-berry, or at least what we took to be one, and that led us on to talk about Scotland.

'Did you ever hear of a Mr. Ballardie?' I asked.

'Which of them?' he said, 'for there are three brothers.'

'Yes,' I said, 'Mr. Joseph, and Mr. Thomas, and Mr. George; tell me about any of them, but first about Mr. George.'

'Well,' said the man, pointing to a place which he told us was eight miles off, 'do you see that coffee-garden away over there? [It was in the days before coffee had been supplanted by tea in Ceylon.] That 's where Mr. George Ballardie lives.'

"Only eight miles off! but it might as well have been eight hundred, for the steamer that was to take us to Singapore was already almost due at Point-de-Galle, and we had a long way to go, and every hour was precious.

"I have never seen him since the day he said good-bye, but I can still see his blue eyes and his high forehead, and I can still hear him reading from the *Course*: 'And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'"

"Remember, I was very busy when I was a lad. I went to the High School when I was twelve. Became tutor when I was thirteen. Never had any play. Got more teaching when I was fifteen. Worked even during the holidays (the High School prizes were given in October, and we had summer tasks). I tried my last year for the Greek Verb Medal, printed a great sheet 6 feet by 5, working eight and nine and twelve, and latterly fifteen, hours a day—and lost it. Then I went to College when I was fifteen and a half; worked hard, and in the summer tried for a University prize, translating a work of Tacitus —very difficult; worked all summer and lost it. Another hard winter, and summer after, had teaching and worked

up Latin and Greek for my degree. Summer after, tried again for the Coulter prize, open to the whole University (translation of a speech of Demosthenes), and got it. Next summer I was with the Wilsons, and put on spectacles for the first time, I think, in August!

"In our home we never read Burns or Shakespeare or novels. Lessons all week, and Bunyan and other religious books on Sabbath. I bought a Burns last year. The first I ever had! Very culpable in a Scotchman. I love a great many of his songs and will read those you speak of.

"My reason for telling you how busy I was as a boy was only to show you that I wasn't idle. I read nothing but my lessons, and had barely time for them. I was determined to be Dux and always Dux. When I went to the High School my Latin and Greek were of the most inaccurate description, and my heart sank within me the first day when I heard boys of my own age do their lessons in a way I couldn't. I was at the bottom of the third division (divisions according to age) and forty-five or fifty boys above me; a fellow Tweedly sat beside me, fresh from a boarding-school. He got up Dux the third day; I stayed far down till the third week, when I got up for the conjugation of a difficult verb, and for three years after that I was never lower than third, and that only once. I rose at three in the morning. The cleverest fellow—far and away—was Rowland Hill Macdonald; he would have been easy first if he had liked. The fourth and fifth year my hardest opponent was Ronald Johnson."

A RECOLLECTION

By W. H.

In the early summer of 1862 a lad, fresh from the country, made his way one Sabbath morning to an obscure church situated in Mains Street, Anderston, Glasgow. The hour was early, and few worshippers had as yet appeared. A man with his wife and two sons came into the seat

which he occupied. The man, short of stature, was dark, with a staid, not to say severe appearance, and had the look of a thoughtful mechanic slightly past middle age. The wife was tall, with dark hair and black, piercing eyes. The younger of the two boys wore a blouse, and, though plain, his features were enhanced by a pair of dark, lustrous eyes. As was afterwards learned, he was 'a lad o' pregnant pairts,' the most distinguished pupil in St. Peter's School, and was called Johnnie Struthers.

From this elementary school, with which, at the request of his teachers, he still retained a nominal connection, he passed to the High School, then situated in John Street, near the centre of the city. The triumphs he had achieved in St. Peter's School followed him here. Though reserved in manner he was popular with his companions, and, as far as his nearsightedness would permit, took part with them in their outdoor amusements. It was, however, in the class-room that he particularly shone. But so great was his reserve that no one outside of school, with perhaps the exception of his mother, knew his position in his several classes. An illustration of this is furnished by a lady well informed, and a great admirer of Mr. Struthers' youthful career. An old woman, residing in the neighbourhood, made a frugal midday meal for some of the boys who lived at a distance. She took a deep interest in their welfare, learned much as to the position they occupied in their classes, and had a shrewd idea as to the prospective prize-winners. Johnnie, as he was called by the boys, was certain, they said, of the Gold Medal in the Latin class, but little was said as to the prospective winner of the medal in the Greek class. The old woman was in a state of uncertainty, but, jealous of the reputation of her favourite, extracted from him a promise to be informed when the result was made known. Accordingly on the day when the prizes were awarded he showed her the medal for Latin. She smilingly congratulated him, but her countenance clouded as she added, 'But Jimmie —— got the medal for Greek.' Unable in the presence of his

companions to conceal the fact, he put his forefinger and thumb into his vest pocket and extracted the treasure, saying, 'There it is.'

A double first in classics—a Gold Medal in Latin and a Gold Medal in Greek—was indeed a trophy of which any boy might feel proud. But there was more to follow. On this, his last year at the High School, he graduated 'Dux,' and gained a leading if not *the* leading position in all his classes. On his reaching home his mother, with a woman's wiles, learned how matters stood. Though proud of her boy, she concealed her feelings till the return in the evening of her husband and his son. To them she communicated in part Johnnie's success, and asked them to assist in bringing home his prizes. Imagine their surprise on learning that a wheelbarrow was necessary for the purpose.

Thus prepared, he matriculated as a student of the Glasgow University in November 1866. There in the Latin class-room of the Old College it was the writer's privilege first to be addressed by J. P. Struthers. It was certainly a privilege to be recognised by one who from the opening of the session had distinguished himself among his compeers. He was youthful in dress and appearance, but his reputation as 'Dux of the Glasgow High School,' and the answers he returned to the questions put by the Professor to the class in general soon marked him out as a prizeman. True, at the close of the session, he was only awarded second place by the votes of his fellow-students, but the voting was close. Even second place among one hundred and sixty students, and competitors like William Bathgate, Adam Gordon, A. R. M'Ewen, and Maurice Lothian, was no mean honour.

He attained a similar position in the Greek class, where he had the same competitors. Indeed he had the first or second place in all his Arts classes, with the exception of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. In the laboratory connected with the latter class he did excellent work, which received marked approval at the hands of the Professor, that distinguished scientist, Sir Wm. Thomson,

afterwards Lord Kelvin. As a fitting termination to such a career he was asked to offer himself as a candidate for the Snell Exhibition, which includes four years' training at Balliol College, Oxford, but to the disappointment of many he positively declined. Nor did he take his degree with first-class honours in classics and philosophy, as many expected, but rested contented with the ordinary M.A.

Dedicated to the ministry from his birth by a pious mother, a dedication heartily concurred in by her husband, John P. Struthers, in harmony with his own earnest wish, commenced the following Session the study of Theology. He took the regular course of instruction prescribed for students of the Established Church under one of the University professors. This was supplemented by his attendance at several classes in the Free Church Hall, and by taking one or two Sessions at the Hall of the United Original Secession Church. This was the Church of his childhood, and he cherished for it a fond affection. He dearly loved Professor Aitken, and related with solemnity the following incident: A student had read in 1 Peter i. 4 a description of the heavenly inheritance. The Professor paused, repeated slowly the Greek words which had been read—Εἰς κληρονομίαν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀμίαντον καὶ ἀμάραντον —and then, as if emerging from a fit of wonder, said, 'as if the thought was music to the apostle's soul.' Nurtured on the theology of Boston and the Erskines, he did not take kindly to newer methods. He admired Professor John Caird as a man of great ability, culture, and eloquence, but at times dissented from the views enunciated from his chair. Meeting me one day on coming out of the Divinity class, he said with solemnity, 'Dr. Caird has discarded the argument from design. I cannot see *now* how he is to prove the existence of God.'

But though dissenting from some of the views propounded, he gave the most earnest attention to his studies. And the fact that he led in all his classes is an evidence of this. Nor was this all. Dr. Caird and his colleagues awarded him the money prize adjudged to the student

who gave in the best sermon during the year. He was a great favourite with his professors, who, through Dr. Caird, offered him the position of Professor of Greek in an Australian University. This offer, made to a student not of their communion, showed great magnanimity of spirit. Carrying with it an emolument of six hundred pounds a year, this offer was one which few students in his circumstances would have refused. But he did refuse it. His refusal of the office was a surprise to his teacher, who learned that day that, though dormant, the spirit of the Covenanters was not yet dead. 'Will you reject this offer, to become a Cameronian minister at eighty pounds a year?' 'I cannot help it, sir,' was the reply. 'I have made up my mind to be a minister.'

During part of our college career it was the writer's privilege to walk with Struthers into the country on Friday afternoons. What seasons of enjoyment these were! What humour! What brilliant quotations from Tennyson, Ruskin, but more frequently the *Pilgrim's Progress*. This work he quoted with such accuracy as to leave the impression that he had committed it to memory. His classical allusions were sometimes too erudite for one of meaner capacity to follow, but his quotations from the sermons, and his imitations of favourite ministers known to us, were a rich treat. I say favourite, for he invariably said that he would imitate no man whom he disliked. Great as he was in the class-room, he appeared—at least so one companion thought—to greater advantage in private conversation.

During the whole of his career as a student he acted in the capacity of a tutor. His services, cordially recommended by his professors, were eagerly sought by persons of means on behalf of members of their families. But while acting the part of 'sage, philosopher, and friend' to the young, he not unfrequently was honoured with the friendship of their parents. To the one he commended himself as a man of sterling qualities, and of lofty ideals: to the other as an excellent teacher, a wise counsellor,

and an amusing companion. And among his pupils some rose to eminence, and reflected credit upon him whom they continued to call their beloved tutor.

His duties as tutor made serious inroads upon his time. Much sleep was lost, and much gas was consumed by him. Long after midnight, and frequently, before examinations, the whole night through, the lighted window in Shamrock Street bore testimony to the diligence of one in pursuit of knowledge. Such incessant study did not at any time seriously affect his iron constitution, nor did it abridge in any way his discharge of religious duty. Each Sabbath found him twice in the house of God, and no study of a secular kind ever engaged his attention on that day. Indeed, apart from the rest it afforded, and the change from the consideration of things worldly to things unseen and eternal, it is hard to see how his physical constitution could have sustained the strain of such close application to study.

It was my privilege to spend two week-ends with him. On the first occasion he was acting as tutor to a family in the neighbourhood of Stirling. On the Saturday we took in the sights, visiting the Castle, Wallace's Monument, and other places of interest. He was full of historical lore, and as usual bubbling over with mirth. His references to the family were kindly in the extreme. According to him the lady was a saint, and but for his own presence the household might rank high among the families of God. This depreciation of self, and reticence in regard to his own movements, were characteristic of him. Though one of his most intimate friends, I learned of his licence to preach the Gospel from another source, and that in spite of the fact I had been in his company a day or two before he took this important step.

Though we occasionally corresponded after his settlement in Wigtownshire, it was never our privilege again to meet. For many years we were separated by mountain, stream, and sea, but never have I ceased to interest myself in one whom I esteemed so highly, and whose gifts and graces commanded the admiration of all his friends.

CHAPTER III

TUTORSHIP

'The chief use of this life is to form friendships for the next.'—J. RENDEL HARRIS.

'I herd my selfe a good husbande at his bokes ones saye, that to omit studie sometime of the daye and sometime of the yere, made as moche for the increase of learning, as to let the land lye sometime falloe, maketh for the better encrease of corne.'—ROGER ASCHAM.

MY husband always regretted that he had begun to tutor when he was so young. He thought this work occupied too much of the time he ought to have devoted to his own studies. It began in this way. A lady, a stranger, happened to call at his home by mistake, and saw the boy absorbed in a Greek dictionary. Before she left the house she had persuaded his mother to allow him to come and help her boy, evidently less studiously inclined, with his lessons. With the first money so earned he presented a prize for spelling to the scholars of his old school, Free St. Peter's. If, however, time was lost, much was gained in friendship. He had the gift of making friends and keeping them, and tributes to the esteem and affection in which he was held by his pupils, when he himself was but a boy, were not wanting at the time of his death, after the lapse of fifty years.

Towards the close of his student career, during the summer vacations he held the post of tutor, first in one home and then in another, in each of which there was an only son. And then, before accepting a charge

as minister, he travelled round the world as companion to one who had often been a guest in these homes.

It will perhaps obviate a multiplication of notes if it is explained now that the letters under the familiar headings of 'David,' 'Walter,' and 'Bob'—with variations—were those written to his former pupils—now David Wilson, LL.D., of Carbeth, Killearn, and Lieut.-Col. W. Wingate Gray, D.L., of Nunraw, Haddingtonshire, and to his erstwhile travelling companion, Robert S. Allan, LL.D., Chairman of the Glasgow School Board in the years 1903-1914. These letters show the happy relationship that existed between them. To the last they were all good friends.

To Mr. David Wilson

(*With accompanying footnotes.*)

34 Shamrock Street,
Glasgow, 26*th August* 1872.

Dear Master David,—There are some whom it delights to gather Sauchiehall St. dust on the first day of the tramways, and to have shunned the curbstones with rapid wheels; others it delights to stay out under the chilly sky, shooting grouse; others, to make many runs at cricket; me, O Davide, it pleases to receive letters from you, and if you but insert my name among your correspondents I shall strike the stars with the top of my head.* Verily I was furiously wroth with the (post-)card trick. I was for donning my war paint, and shrieking the war-cry, and hurling the patoo-patoo † and swearing everlasting vengeance. The veins stood out a purple network on the expanse ‡ of my brow, like unto a snake on the heights

* Horace expresses similar sentiments singularly enough in *Odes*, Bk. I. 1. But would I be justified in accusing him of plagiarism? Surely not.

† An instrument used by Australian tribes for accelerating a man's entrance to the happy land.

‡ This is sarcasm.

of woody Ida, that erects its mane and spits out forks of flame from its eyes ; * and woolly sheep flee to the shepherd, who, girt as to his loins with an elegant cincture and a life preserver,† rushes forth and smites the reptile, and erects a trophy, and says, Io triumphe ! And he skins it, and takes it home, and shows it ‡ to his wife and children. But they hide their heads ; then, indeed, moreover, truly, however, forsooth,§ she wipes their tear-flowing eyes with her apron, but there was a pin in it where the dog had torn it with its sharp front tooth—and the dog's name was Bucephalus, but the babes called it Buph ||—and the pin scratched their eyelids and the loud tears flowed more, till their mother gave them each three red ¶ toffy balls, and they smiled to their dear father. Even like unto the snake was I.** But your letter mollified me, and I who was formerly so fierce was rendered tractable and gentle and forgiving †† by your wit and good humour and great kindness. And I turned my eyes to where I thought Kelso might be, and made 15 prostrations and 21 genuflexions. We were all delighted in fact and laughed vehemently. I was treated with considerably more respect that day and ever since. So true is it that even friends look more kindly on you when you have on silver slippers and walk the streets with applause.

Ah, but I am turning thinner every day. I am fast dwindling away, and if I should go on at the same ratio, in the inverse square of the distance of time ‡‡ there will

* The exuberance of metaphor in this passage cannot fail to strike you as, at the least, remarkable.

† A good instance of Zeugma—the right of reproduction and translation is reserved.

‡ *i.e.* the skin. Zumpt says, 'Serpens, sine dubio.' But why would the shepherd have skinned it on the mountain top ?

§ This expressive line occurs in Homer *passim*.

|| Pet names are usually contractions ; *e.g.*, Cock Robin, Jack the Giant Killer, etc., etc.

¶ The Scholiast, with much feeling, remarks : 'The red colour would please the eye, while the sweet taste would please the mouth.'

** This episode is too long. I hope you have not read it.

†† Mark the gradation.

‡‡ There is some mistake here. The writer has probably heard some one repeating Kepler's Laws.

soon not be enough left of me to make a shadow. Perhaps the weather is somewhat to blame for that. It 's not the same cheery, sunshiny sort of thing we had at Stirling. It has always either just been raining or just going to rain; and generally it has been both. And when it wasn't raining there was a terrible misty drizzle that felt like a ghastly perspiration from the stars.* They won't let you give them round hand? Serves you right. I laughed very heartily at that. I miss cricket very much. I have about three extra-mural friends, and I have disgusted them all by talking about cuts and drives. They can't put up with it. They say, Who can be bothered with a fellow that 's always picking up stones and shying them on the road? They tell me I 'll be apprehended, and then something like this will appear in the papers—'A young man of shabby-genteel appearance was charged with hurling brick-bats at the Maryhill Police,' etc., etc. Now that rather frightened me, for you know the police are popularly said to be fit for anything, and no one—no young man at least—escapes even from a false accusation with unblemished character.

You make no pretence to be studying, Well, I can't blame you very much, as you say you are going to work on your return with an energy doubly re-doubled. I trust you will lay up a store of health and good nature. . . . So prayeth J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Lindsay Galloway

(Who was being sent by Sir William Thomson to take soundings with a newly invented apparatus for the Western and Brazilian Telegraph Cable.)

WEST PLEAN HOUSE,
STIRLING, 1873.

DEAR ELECTRICIAN,—It was my wish and intention to have written a mirifically long epistle unto you, but sheer

* This last phrase is not original: but for all that, it is very good. Bathgate used it when he was in Stirling. [J. P. S.]

want of time—through no fault of mine—has hitherto prevented me and still doth.

Allow me then simply in one word to tell you how happy I feel over this new success of yours, and trust it is but the first evidence of the diligence and genius entrusted to your care. Of course I can't expect *you* to take further notice of *me*, but tho' the eagle in the sky doesn't notice the sparrow ('struthos,' *Graecè*; fact!) in the hedge, yet the sparrow in the hedge noticeth the eagle in the sky, and rejoiceth in the vision.

Go on, good Lindsay; and if the exalted friends you now meet with in life joy as truly in your prosperity as the humble ones you have met with in the past, you shall have no lack of true friendship, indeed. I shall give you this advice—Take copious notes of your voyage and subsequent ongoings, especially anecdotes which in one touch often give a whole lot of Nature's secrets, and if you don't some day find an honourable journal to accept your manuscript, your descriptive and suggestive pen and the press of the country aren't what I take them to be.

I can only once more approve Sir William's choice and yours, and wish you in your first life's undertaking and all subsequent ones a true 'God Speed.'—Farewell from

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To his Brother

AUCHENBOWIE,* *July* 2, 1874.

MY DEAR BILL,—Your splendid letter delighted me very much. Two daughters of Dr. H—— have come this afternoon, and David is too fond of his cousins to trouble me much—so here I am in my room looking out to the trees and the twilight and the rain.

We had almost uninterrupted good weather till last week. Since then rain, thunder and lightning, such as frightened poor Christian at Mount Sinai, have been going it full

* At this time Auchenbowie and Rankeilour were the summer residences of Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Gray respectively.

hurl. The ground previously was cracking with heat; now things are looking better; and, as the gardener says, 'the very moudie hills are clapping their hands.'

The rabbits are multiplying on the face of the earth and living on the neighbouring farmers. I got hold of a little one the other day, so small that it was almost all ears, and fed it for two or three days, and really its appetite was so enormous that it would have kept an able-bodied active young man all day gathering provender for it. I don't see what Noah did in the ark with them.

I am getting on very well with the family. When they have extra fine company I get up an excuse and go into Stirling and look about me. Old Lizzie, the housekeeper for forty years, has a room just opposite mine. I go in often and torment her a bit, so that she tells Mr. David I am 'crackit a wee!' The other night I told her I could guess her thoughts, and bade her count 75 and look straight at me. She got angry, and turned away her head, and said I wanted to mesmerise her. I said if she wouldn't look at me, the mirror would do; whereupon she rushed at me and took it from me. Then I seized a silver spoon and said it would do, when she got in a rage and showed me to the door. Then I begged her pardon, and got a piece of bread and butter. I open her window at times, and bellow to the cows, when instantly they come galloping up the hill not knowing where to look, poor Lizzie regarding me as if I weren't canny.

The very outlines of the trees are now invisible, and I can see the drops of rain on the window glittering in my candlelight. You will now all be off to bed forgetting me in your sleep, but wherever I go, and whatever I do, I trust to remember all your faces, and behave as if you were all looking at the old son, *Jan.*

I don't think I told you this. Davie and I had been playing cricket, and old Mr. M—— had seen us. At dinner he said to me, 'I was delighted to see your fine military step out in the field.' Mrs. Wilson said, 'Was it not David you saw?' 'Oh no,' said Mr. M——, 'I saw

him too, with a funny cap on his head, going on like a harlequin.' I need hardly tell you Mrs. Wilson was crushed, and I take care to tell all the visitors.

The birds don't sing so merrily here as at Plean. The gardener kills and harries all the young birds he gets—nine nests of a morning—so that any amount of praise and psalmody is quenched for ever. . . .

To Mr. David Wilson

34 SHAMROCK STREET, GLASGOW,
(late Kincardine Castle)
15*th June* 1875.

MY DEAR DAVID,—The above heading forcibly and painfully reminds me of my altered circumstances. But yesterday—a fortnight ago—I might have stood before the world; now, none so poor as do me reverence. All is changed—I am reduced to my primitive level, and all I can now do is to say, with as much appearance of humour as I can, that like pale Death I visit with impartial step rich men's towers and poor men's huts. To change the metaphor—I am like the rat that on its return to its native drain, after a sojourn in the country, made a somewhat witty remark. I regret that at the present I cannot charge my memory even with the idea, let alone the exact words, but you will easily apperceive that the quotation would not have been altogether infelicitous.

I was so grieved at the contemptible display made by Glasgow at the Inter-City Cricket Match that for the second time in my life I made a serious resolution anent cricket. I have had no enjoyment since. But I am forgetting—I have had a good deal of fun, and that from letters. (1st) Letters of my own written to my brother last year from Auchenbowie, Crieff, Aberfeldy, and Tummel Bridge. I fell into the whole lot of them, and have been much amused going over the names of visitors, incidents, picnics, etc., though one thing makes one almost doubt their authenticity as historical documents—that is, I seem

to have been uniformly at a tremendous pitch of happiness, whereas it is well known to you certain moral defects in your character as a cricketer not infrequently embittered my equitable soul. (2nd) Your letters to me, chiefly after my leaving Auchenbowie. Comment is superfluous; there are very few of them, but there is a tone of humility and a tacit suing for pardon that justifies the view taken above as to the causes of the unhappiness of our relations. (3rd) Also, Walter's letters to me of this year. He has really written some very good ones, almost as good as yours both in wit and spelling. He had been at the Loch Leven Competition.

I presume you will be acquiring that 'indecent familiarity with mathematics' that my successor is so well qualified to impart. You must tell me all about him—his height, general appearance, voice, attainments and character. There is nothing wrong in telling me these things. I have ceased for ever to be your tutor, and tho' there may be regret on my part, there is no room for envy. I at least am working decently hard. You should see me at Hebrew, theology and cognate branches. It would do your heart good.

I may add I have changed my name again. I have found out that my *abavia* and *atavia* (distant grandmothers) were called Falconer and Lapsley, and therefore until further notice I am, your humble friend,

LAPSLEY FALCONER.

The following epigram has been kindly sent to me by the Rev. D. D. Ormond, D.D., Stirling. It was written in Professor Lindsay's Church History Class, in the Free Church College, Glasgow, in 1875. In the spring of that year the names of some of the students who were looking forward to be licensed by Free Church Presbyteries were read out by Dr. Lindsay, the surname preceding the initials. By mistake Mr. Ormond's name was read out 'George.' Mr. Ormond

explained that his initials were D. D. In an instant J. P. Struthers, also a student at that time, tore a leaf out of his notebook, wrote the epigram, and circulated it round the class, to the amusement of the other students.

To D. D. Ormond

Ormond, thou 'rt callèd O. D. D.,
'Tis odd thy name should changèd be;
And yet the true D. D. is he
Who George-like makes the Dragon * flee.

* 'That old serpent, which is the Devil.'

To his Brother

RANKEILOUR, GARDEN OF EDEN,
August 1875.

DEAR BILL,—We are going this afternoon after some 'flappers,' or young wild ducks, that have been hatched in the mill pond. In a few days they would leave for more extensive and commodious quarters, but Walter intends to lay an arrest on them, and I intend to go with him, regardless of all your logical quibbles about gamekeepers. And indeed I have a shrewd idea you would go yourself if you could, though ostensibly only on the plea, like the old woman who went to hear Dinah Morris preach, that you were just 'a going to see what were agoing on like.'

11*th August* 1875.

Last Friday we ran the mill lade dry, and guddled for trout. It was terribly dirty work. Near the mill the burn is built all over, and flows through a small tunnel, about three feet high and four wide, for about forty yards. Along this the coachman and I went on our hands and knees, he with a net and I with a lamp, till we came to the big wheel. There was no way of getting out but by clambering up it and over it, and it was really hard work. There was about two inches of water all the way, and we had some exciting chases after eels and trout, getting a few. After half an

hour in this drain we got into open air, like Christian out of the Valley of Humiliation—had more chases after trout, especially under the bridges, where the little wretches had crept into all sorts of crevices. We could feel their tails, but that was all. Of course to attempt to catch a trout by its tail would be as absurd as to attempt 'to wound the inviolable air,' as Shakespeare says. . . .

While I am writing this in the library a pretty little cock-robin with a red and white waistcoat is hopping about the floor. It has come in through the open window, and can't find its way out. It has not, however, quite lost its presence of mind, as it has just nobbled and gobbled up a fly on the window pane. . . . J. P. STRUTHERS.

Perhaps some may be inclined to think that these letters tell much of play and almost nothing of study. It must, however, be remembered they were written in holiday time. Looking back to those happy days with their rush of young life—the masquerading, the reckless toboganning, the fierce pillow-fighting, one thinks of Edward Fitzgerald's lines :—

> 'I talk of our youth,
> How 'twas gladsome, but often
> Foolish, forsooth,
> But gladsome, gladsome.'

To J. P. S. the contrast to his own home-life must have been very great, nevertheless he was generally the leading spirit in the fun. Let it be made known, however, that unless in exceptional circumstances some of the morning hours were devoted to study.

To the same

RANKEILOUR, *August* 18, 1875.

DEAR BILL,—We have had a very jolly time of it since I last wrote.

Last Wednesday we took train to St. Andrews. Never

enjoyed anything more. The day was beautiful when we started, but after we had gone round the town and seen the Cathedral, the Martyrs' Monument, and the Castle, and the Colleges, the whole sky over the sea became black as night, and we had the privilege of watching a fearful thunderstorm. There were flashes every minute, and with every flash I, at least, did exceedingly fear and quake. Walter and young Malcolm Cross were with me. They went off for lunch, and I went down into the deep and had a magnificent bathe amid peals of thunder and flashes of lightning.

Ira D. Sankey and father came back and were here a week. His wife and son had been here all along. We had a most happy time with them indeed. When he went away Sankey gave me his photograph, and on the back of it wrote :—'To Mr. J. P. Struthers, from his friend, Ira D. Sankey.' Perhaps I should have burned it, but I didn't, and don't intend to. I never came across a nicer fellow, good-natured, humble, kind. We had lots of chats together, and I know as much about America now as if I had been free born under the shadow of the Eagle. We had a great deal of singing, practising new tunes, etc., I holding the candle meantime, like, I suppose, Naaman letting his master lean on him in the temple of Rimmon.

It may interest you to know that Sankey's voice extends over two octaves and two notes, that is, eighteen notes in all. You may try yours on the piano. I can go two notes below him. We tried it one evening. He went with us to church last Sabbath, and while we were in a house having lunch a deputation came to him asking him to sing once in the afternoon, but he refused. The number of letters, books, sermons, etc., he receives is incredible. He told us he had already sent off a large box to America full of books, and was so sick of sermons that, having got a book of them sent to him at Perth, he left the book in the house he had been visiting, and, for fear they should send it after him, wrote on the fly-leaf—'Don't want this book. Ira D. Sankey.'

His son is a regular little American, rather given to striking and hitting, but very nice withal. The other day he was ordered out of the room at breakfast time, and being asked by the housemaid, as he was going upstairs, why he wasn't having breakfast, he replied, 'Ain't wanting any breakfast to-day, I guess.' The grandfather is the most perfect raw-boned Yankee I ever saw, full of all sorts of phrases and stories. He was a senator in Pennsylvania Legislature, newspaper editor, revenue officer, tanner, and all sorts of things. We have fine family worship. I read the chapter, and old Sankey prays, and Ira sings.—Adieu.

J. P. ST. RUTHERS.

To the same

RANKEILOUR, *August* 25, 1875.

DEAR BILL,—I don't think I have any news to give you. We have to play a match on Saturday at Kettle o' Cults. Tell Father there is to be a good match at the Academical grounds in Glasgow. The crops are all being cut round about here. You can hear the sound of the reaping machines everywhere. Walter will have 3500 acres of shooting—Rankeilour, Pitlair, Kinloch, Kilmany, and Russell Mill, the latter from Admiral Lewis Maitland. I have been reading the private log-book of the man to whom Napoleon surrendered,[1] and getting a fine lot of good similes, metaphors, etc.—Your affec. brother, JOHN.

To his Father

RANKEILOUR, 21*st September* 1875.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Yesterday, Monday, we went to Kinloch. Mr. MacKenzie, the tenant of the estate, and Mr. Turner, an Irish gentleman, were there. We killed twelve and a half brace partridges, four rabbits, two hares, one cock-pheasant by mistake, and a fox! They

[1] Capt. Maitland, of the *Bellerophon*, to whose family Rankeilour House had belonged.

thought the fox at first was a hare, and before he saw his mistake Mr. Turner had bowled him over. I got him into my bag as quickly as possible. Fifeshire, you know, is a great hunting county, and killing a fox is the greatest crime a huntsman knows. We got it home to Rankeilour, and after cutting off the brush and the head buried it quietly this morning.[1]

I had not been asked to dine at Kinloch, and did not take my dress suit, but just as I was starting for home, the lady of the house came out and said I should never be forgiven, and the two gentlemen gripped me by the neck and hauled me in. I got the loan of a shirt, a collar, a tie, a pair of shoes, and the Irish gentleman's coat, and had to dine in that plight with four gentlemen and eight ladies. The gentleman of the house very kindly kept on a tweed suit not to make me feel odd.

To-morrow morning, if all is well, the same party are going to Kilmany. We shall have a ten miles' drive. Kilmany, you know, is the place Dr. Chalmers was minister of. We intend having a picnic if the weather is good. I hope you and mother are in good health, as is the 'Jan.'

At Monimail they have got a new minister. I went last Sabbath to hear him introduced, and heard a sermon from Mr. Robertson of Newbigging, on Christ going into

[1] Time did not lessen the sense of horror of this deed. Long after, J. P. S. wrote :—'Many years ago in Fifeshire, where they say the man who would shoot a fox is capable of shooting his own grandfather, I carried a fox for six long hours, concealing it like the famous Spartan boy—only his was a living one !—to save the reputation of an Irish gentleman—and specially of his host and mine—who had mistaken, for the fraction of a second, a fox in an outlying patch of heavy turnips for a big brown hare ! Oh, memorable, miserable day ! And oh, miserable moonlight night, as we drove home hoping that no foxhound by any chance should be having an evening constitutional ; and how our hearts came into our mouths when the young lady who was our companion, after much endurance, told us at last that ever since she had stepped into the phaeton a strange sense of oppression had come over her even to faintness, and how it was a relief to her, and yet no relief, when we told her—for we knew she could be trusted—that there was a vulpicide sitting beside her, and we were carrying his victim home in the game-bag to bury it ! '

a solitary place to pray early in the morning. He said that Christ not only prayed but probably also studied hard preparing His parables, etc., when He sat up at nights in the mountains. What does the Bill think of that? . . . —Your affec. son, JOHN.

The following account of Rankeilour House, Fife-shire, and the accompanying parodies and sketches (with Col. W. Wingate Gray's kind permission) are taken from two books in which a record was kept, in the shooting seasons of 1875-6, of the game that fell to the sportsmen's guns. J. P. S. was the Recorder, and the more bombastic the descriptions of the shooting exploits were, the greater were the admiration and merriment they called forth.

RANKEILOUR HOUSE

"The illustrious Caius Julius Cæsar wittily remarks of that part of Gaul which was inhabited by the Belgæ, that it 'looked towards the north.' A similar statement might be made with perfect propriety regarding Rankeilour Makgill. Rankeilour, however, not only looks toward the north, but also towards the south, east, and west. So that to an acute observer, if the building were a little higher than it is, the orb of day would be visible, weather permitting, from the moment he rises in the Orient till he falls exhausted in the Western Main. This is the first time, we believe, this fact has been noticed, but its truth is none the less certain.

"The date, name, and purpose of its builder—and in this it resembles the Pyramids—are unknown to us, but if we may infer anything from the evidence, both internal and external, which we have with no little trouble collected, we would hazard the conjecture that it must have been built sometime during the Christian Era—certainly not later. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the House is, and is there, and this itself should silence the most captious critic even in this doubting age.

"But even supposing one set out for Rankeilour House with a thorough belief in its existence, there are still difficulties in the way. For man, however infinite his desires, is hampered by the finitude of his relations. There is a burn to cross, and how is that to be done? That was the problem that stared men in the face long years ago. But in time, after long deliberation, a bridge was thought of. And no sooner did the feasibility of the project become as apparent as its necessity than a noble band of workmen —those sons of toil who have raised our country to its proud pre-eminence among the nations—set themselves to work, and built the bridge, of which our artist has given such a lifelike representation.

"Half a furlong below the bridge the Rankeilour Burn, that had hitherto revelled in all its native freedom, becomes a pond of uncertain length and width at the caprice of a saw-miller. For this man, mere mortal tho' he be, by means of a sluice arrogates the functions of a moon and impiously makes the water ebb and flow.

"The degeneracy of our times may be seen from this. Two hundred years ago no one could have gone round the margin of the pond without, probably, seeing the white head of some hoary Covenanter hiding among the reeds, or at least hearing some simple strain of sweetest melody from the martyr's lips; now nothing can be seen but the wild fowl's rapid flight and the poacher's gins. The silence is never broken save by the splash of the trout, and the dip of the solitary paddle of some fisherman singing as he rows, and the water-hen's derisive cluck.

"There are no Covenanters lurking now."

To W. W. G.

1875

I met a little sporting man,
  Nineteen years old, he said;
His hat had many a woodcock brush
  Stuck in below the braid.

He had a coat of wondrous make,
And leather gaiters too;
And round his neck a huge game-bag,
And a whistle which he blew.

'Feather and fur, my little man,
How many may there be?'
'How many? Seven in all,' he said,
And wondering looked at me.

'And where are they? I pray you tell.'
He answered, 'Seven there be.'
'But there is nothing in your bag
As far as I can see.'

'The first I killed was little Jack;
In the bog he flutt'ring lay
Till Nero [1] went to fetch him out,
And then he flew away.'

'Then that is six, my little man.'
He answered, 'Seven there be.
I shot a glorious mallard drake,
But it is gone to sea.'

'The mallard and the snipe, you say,
Are both of them alive;
If you have neither in your bag,
Then there are only five.'

'I winged a brace of pheasants, too,
They rose in yonder tree.'
'But since they both were only winged,
Then there are only three.'

'A rabbit next I struck, and it
Deep in the den doth lie;
A partridge, too, whose legs I broke;
I 'm sure it 's bound to die.'

[1] The retriever.

'Your birds, your snipe, your rabbit, duck—
Of these your bag hath none;
If six were lost of seven you hit,
Then you have only one.'

The little sportsman did reply,
'Nay, Master, I have seven.'
'But they are lost, those six were lost
They 're flying up in heaven!'
'Twas throwing words away, for still
The little man would have his will,
And said, 'Nay, there are seven!'

THE SONG OF THE SNIPE

Is there, because he 's unco wee,
That hangs his neb an' a' that?
The damp wee loon, we pass him by,
And daur be sma' for a' that.
For a' that and a' that,
The soil 's gey damp and a' that,
The half-guinea stamp 'll never dae
To shoot a snipe and a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey and a' that,
Gie craws their hoods and cocks their tails,
A snipe 's a snipe for a' that.
For a' that and a' that,
Their tints and rings and a' that,
The wee bit snipe tho' e'er sae sma'
Is king o' game for a' that.

A man can shoot a pheasant cock,
A pa'trick, juck, and a' that,
But a wee jack snipe 's aboon his micht;
Gude faith, he needna try that.
For a' that and a' that,
Their plumages and a' that,
A fine lang neb an' keen black een
Are bonnier far than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As deed it is for a' that,
That snipes may be the hardest game
To shoot and kill and a' that.
For a' that and a' that,
It 's coming yet for a' that,
When snipes and grouse and pheasant cocks
Shall brithers be for a' that.

A MEDLEY

The Lomonds look on Rankeilour,
And Rankeilour looks on the lade,
And coming down that way we thought
That mallard drakes might still be had.
Our hearts leapt up when we beheld
Some wild ducks in the sky;
The sportsmen looked upon the birds
And a tear was in their eye;
They looked upon the beaters,
And their glance was stern and high.

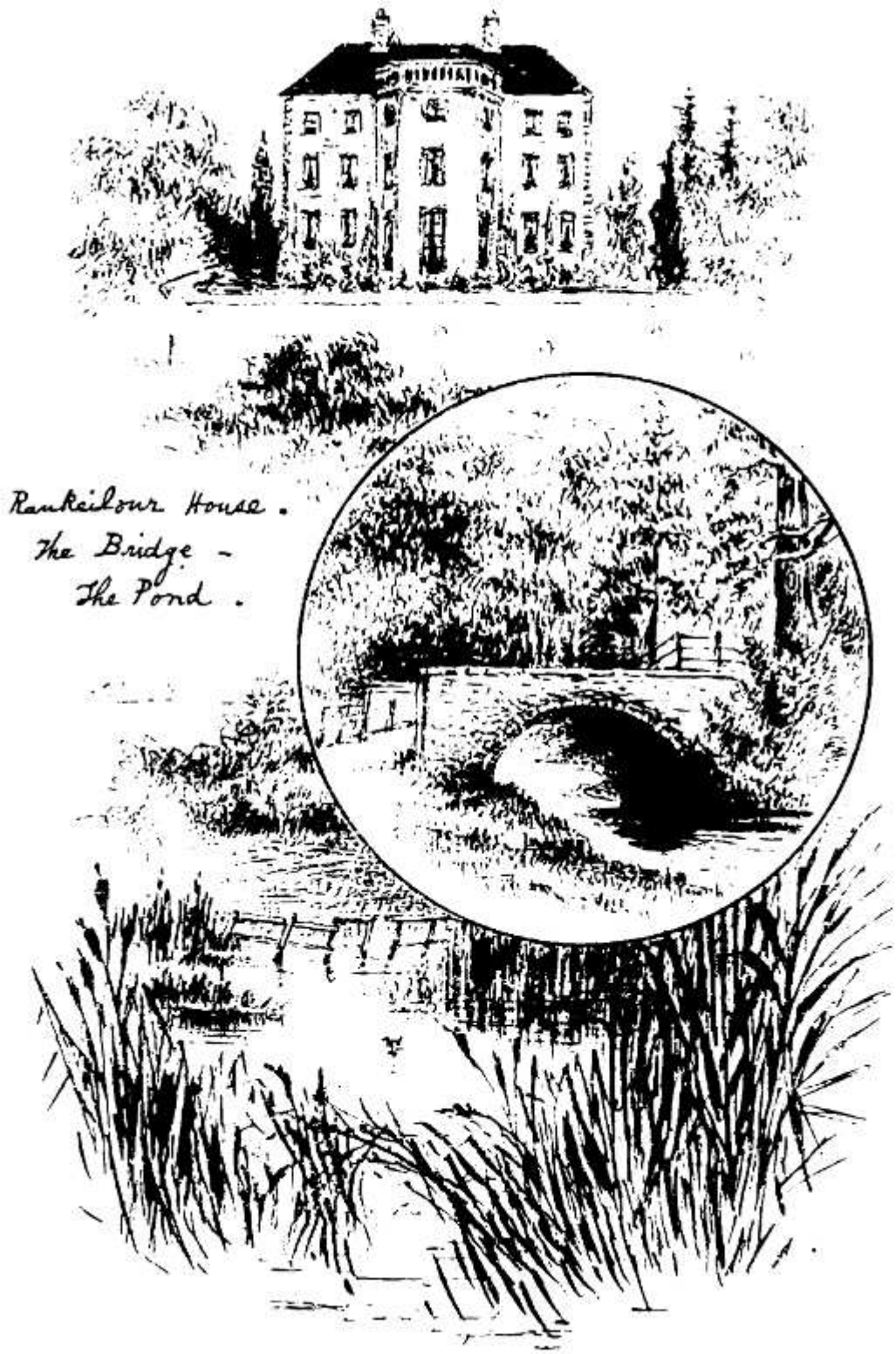
Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
Away flew the wild ducks
Right off to windward.
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they flew and well,
Their ranks all unsundered.

Down in the turnips
Sate cushies six hundred.
Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Buchanan [1] in front of them,
Volleyed and thundered.

[1] Mr. Buchanan (referred to in these lines) was a cousin of Mrs. Gray—an old but very keen sportsman. One afternoon being very stormy, he had left the shooting party and gone home early. When retiring for the night, W. W. G. said to J. P. S., 'What about Mr.

But none remained—
  Remained of six hundred.
All flew into the wood,
While there the gunners stood,
  And gaped and wondered.

Buchanan's gun? —— —— [the gamekeeper] would not get it with the others to clean.' They went down to the gun-room, and there, indeed, was the gun leaning against the wall in a corner, the rust already beginning to gather on it. They held it between them—to use J. P. S.'s words, 'the barrel with the muzzle in the pit of his stomach, while Walter wrought at the butt end and ca'ed well the triggers.' They rubbed and polished, and peered along the barrel to see the effect. Then W. W. G. opened the breech. Consternation! The gun was loaded and on full cock! They felt very queer, but went to bed resolving to say nothing to any one about it. In the morning, however, the first to meet in the breakfast-room were Mrs. Gray and J. P. S. Her severe look and tone showed the tale had been told, and how it had been told. 'Mr. Struthers! What if you had killed my Walter?'



Rankeilour House.
The Bridge -
The Pond.

CHAPTER IV

TRAVEL

'Do you not think a man may be the wiser—I had almost said the better—for going a hundred or two of miles; and that the mind has more room in it than most people seem to think, if you will but furnish the apartments?'—THOMAS GRAY.

IN the summer of 1876 J. P. Struthers was asked by Mr. and Mrs. Alex. Allan to accompany their son Robert on a tour round the world, and the proposal was gladly agreed to. It was arranged they should start in the beginning of the following October. For a few months previous to that date, J. P. Struthers, who had just been licensed to preach by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, occupied the pulpit of the Rev. John M'Donald, in Loanhead, Midlothian. The manse is beautifully situated close by Roslin Glen. The following letters were written from there, when the 'grand tour' was looming in the near future. Later in the summer, Mr. William Corry,[1] cousin of Mr. Robert Allan, asked if he might join the party, and this plan was happily carried out.

To Mr. R. S. Allan

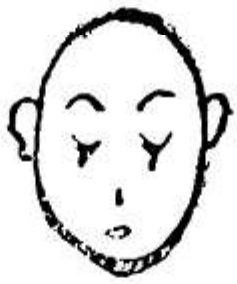
R.P. MANSE, LOANHEAD, BY EDINBURGH,
7.6.76.

HIGHLY INTELLECTUAL SIR,—I think it right to tell you that I went to Roslin Chapel—two miles off—the other day, and I saw a striking example of what a hot-tempered

[1] Now Sir William Corry, Bart.

man may come to. The man who built [1] the chapel went to Rome during the progress of the work to make some sketches, and found on his return that the wicked apprentice had, with his own hand, made a pillar so beautiful that, in fact, it couldn't have been beautifuller. Whereupon, in a fit of jealousy, the master slew the apprentice. Now, if the young man had been spared, the chapel would have been so much more wonderful that you would have paid two shillings and sixpence to get in, whereas you only pay one shilling as it is. And the Earl of Rosslyn loses about twenty eighteenpences every day just because the master builder lost his temper. But besides, the master got his head cut out in stone, and so did the apprentice and the apprentice's mother, thus :—

The Master.



The Apprentice's Mother.

The Apprentice.

You can see in a minute what a genius that boy must have been from the head of him.

Now, my dear Mr. Robert, supposing you were to get angry with me, you might get your head drawn that way, even worse than it is in the Game Book. And you might get your neck drawn too. I assure you I have copied the portraits most accurately, and have, if anything, rather flattered the three individuals in question. Young man ! ! ! ! Take warning ! ! ! ! . . .

But to speak seriously—What are you doing ? I see notices of the *Alceste* in the Edinburgh newspapers occasionally, but with respect to the distinguished R. S. A. on board, they are silent. For myself, I am toiling away, sitting in one posture several hours a day like a Hindoo

[1] 1446 A.D. [J. P. S.]

fakir—notice the Oriental turn of my mind, especially in my similes—my health considerably shattered by staying indoors in Glasgow for three weeks expecting you to call. I have a very pretty spot of earth's surface here, North Berwick Law and the Pentlands being visible from the garden. The heaven hereabouts is swarming with birds, and their singing is heard at all hours of the day and night, like the bells from a Turkish minaret—notice the Orientalisms!

My preparations for the East at present are—the cultivation of a peculiar gravity, wholly alien to my nature, so that I could listen unmoved to the wildest fantasies of an Arab guide—a sternness designed to discourage him that shouteth Baksheesh! Baksheesh!—practice with the dumb-bells to strengthen my arms, that physical force may supplement moral suasion—roaring, that I may be heard by you above the babble of Cairo and the noise of elements when tornadoes blow—watching the faces of the Band of Hope children, that I may learn to recognise honesty and ability wherever they exist—bearing disappointment patiently, so that if you and I should quarrel and all arrangements consequently terminate, I may submit with grace and say the blame was all my own and I must have deserved it.

W. W. G. and D. W. were to have played cricket to-day in Edinburgh, and spent the evening here, but the match is off, and I am left alone like an ibis in the neighbourhood of the Pyramid Gizeh, whose height, etc., etc. Please give my most dutiful respects to Mr. and Mrs. Allan.

I know this is a silly letter, but I am rather jaded, and won't have time to write another this week. Wherefore I make six prostrations and two obeisances in the direction of Hafton House, and one salaam N.N.E., hoping that may find you.

. . . I am reading the *Globe Trotter*, and if I couldn't make a better journal than it, I would have no right to sign myself your friend, J. P. STRUTHERS.

And I don't know whether the compliment to you or to myself is the greater.

To his Brother

LOANHEAD, 12.6.76.

MY DEAR BILL,— . . . I got on yesterday pretty well, better than I expected, tho' I find myself greatly hampered for words sometimes. In the forenoon I prefaced on Ps. xxii., and talked on the character of Lot, making it as interesting as I could. In the evening read 1 Sam. xi., and spoke on Matt. xxv. 10, first clause: 'While they went to buy, the bridegroom came.' Amongst other listeners there was the village idiot, keeping time to the singing with his arms. They call him 'Neddy.' Last Tuesday evening I spoke of Philip's character, but didn't get on very well. I intend to speak of Nathanael to-morrow, and shall try to show that although he was without guile he was not a 'muckle sumph,' as we are apt to suppose. Of course I won't use those words, but will try and remember what you say about 'absurd comparisons.' I have been visiting or rather 'looking in' on people a good deal. I shall mention their names the way the missionaries used to do :—

1. Mr. Ketchen, an elder, and Mrs. Ketchen. Four of a family, very nice people. Have promised to go and take tea some night.

2. Mrs. Peggie Sclater, who has a profound admiration for Mr. M'Donald. She thinks I should try and walk about the platform as he does. Very proud to see me. 'Maun come and tak a cup o' tea,' etc. She wasn't in the kirk yesterday, so I shall look in to-day for five minutes.

3. Mrs. Aggie Sclater, a farmer's wife, remarkably nice. Have promised to go in the evening and see the 'gude man' and take tea.

4. Mrs. Veitch, the Beadle's wife—'A fine man, Mr. M'Donald—his mother must be a prood woman.'

5. Went to see Mr. Bain, an elder who lives at Roslin—seventy-six years old, at church every day, walks two miles. He walked a mile of the way home with me. 'Was prood, prood I had called.' Saw his wife, who is not able to come to church. Called with him on a married son. Saw his

wife and baby, only twelve months old, yet so strong it hit its mother on the face with a tin pitcher! She never thought it could have done it.

And so on.

Don't you think I would almost do for a missionary?

There was a working man's wife in the church last evening who sang alto! . . .

To Mr. R. S. Allan

LOANHEAD, 14.6.76.

His Eminence Struthers, etc., etc.,

To his Irritability: Greeting.

I REGRET much that it will not be in my power to join Walter and yourself in your cruise next week. I am kept pretty busy here, and will be for some time, *so that I really* cannot say when I may be able to accept your kind invitation.

Our letters must have crossed. When you receive this, please remember that you owe me two letters, and that with two, or an equivalent, shall I alone be satisfied. Generous I may be, but just, I am; and the man who tries to impose on me, gentle or simple, will find I am not such a fool as I look. I have a lot of people to call on to-day, and must close. The week seems all too short for the work I have to do, and besides, my watch goes twenty minutes fast every day, and that reduces my time a good deal.

If you can't be bothered writing a letter, at least send a post-card. But if you don't write to me, rest assured I shall write you. Never shall it be said that *I* failed in duty. In token of which characteristic, witness my patronymics, LAPSLEY FALCONER BEE ST. RUTHERS.

To the same

VALLEY OF HUMILIATION, 7.8.76.

DEAR MR. ROBERT,—I am fallen from my high estate, and the man who a week ago steered with a master hand

the yacht *Alceste* from Toward Point to Hunter's Quay is now reduced to walking muddy streets with nothing nobler to grasp than an umbrella. Henceforward, in the matter of misfortune, I take rank with Solon, Crœsus, and the two Napoleons. From my window I see the sea, but the ocean which I behold is the ocean of life :—

> 'No more hauling sheets for me,
> Many thousands gone.'

How many as good as myself have never been in a yacht, and if I am not rich, let me be very thankful that I am at least good. For I am 'just as well as generous.'[1] I paid two shillings to be told that.

I went to the College Library, and got out Sir Charles Dilke's *Greater Britain*, two vols. I am taking notes as I go along, and have learned one or two things. I shall try to have them read by Wednesday, so that I may get other two vols. Dilke takes up, among other places, America and India from a 'human' and statesman point of view. I shall try to get Wilkinson or Lane on Egypt, and Rutherford Alcock or Oliphant on Japan. Edmonston and Douglas have a fine selection of tours, etc., so that by the time you see me I question if the Sadducee will not be a match for even the Wandering Jew. I shall have a little more leisure now, and I expect to make large increase of knowledge. I hope you, too, will try to grow wise ; it is very nice to be tall and strong ; it is far better to be good.

I shall write in a day or two and tell you about my course of reading. If you hear of any extra good book, please let me know the name of it.—Adieu, Sir Salar, and believe me your humble friend,

J. Pariah Saunthers.

[1] The members of a Rankeilour house-party once sent specimens of their handwriting to a lady who professed to tell the character of the writer. The fee was 2s. each, and some of the characteristics were extraordinarily true. 'Just as well as generous,' was one of J. P. S.'s ; which accounts for the frequent repetition of the phrase in his letters about this time.

To Mr. David Wilson

SHAMROCK LODGE, 11*th Aug.* 1876.

MY DEAR DAVIDIUS,— . . . You will recollect that you earnestly invited me to share the glories of your first 12th. You have not withdrawn that offer, and therefore I propose, with your parents' permission, being with you to-morrow at Kincardine—

[Here the reader turns the page.]

in spirit. I regret—probably you rejoice—I cannot be in person—I have to be in Dumfries. I return to Loanhead on Monday, and expect to have better accounts of you in the *Scotsman* this time than I had in the Inter-University Contest.

I am longing bitterly for a chat, but hope to have one soon. Oh, Davidius! I have seen the day when you would not have gone a-shooting without me. But those days are gone. Hence these weeps. I hope you will have a first-rate day's sport.—My dear young friend, your well-wisher,

J. P. ST. RUTHERS.

To Mr. R. S. Allan

17.8.76, HACHOJI.

MY DEAR SPURGEON,—I have just received your letter, and with characteristic promptitude I hasten to reply. Let me impress upon you the necessity of seizing the present moment. I am like the Emperor Trajan—many a day I have lost; you, too, are like the Emperor, far more like him than I am; let us determine to be like him no more. 'We swear.' But I am on the wrong tack. (Notice the maritime flavour of that remark.) I am not in the very least displeased at the expected addition to our party. On the contrary, I should be hugely delighted—especially for your sake. *Now* you shall be kept under control. Mr. Corry will take your head, and I will take your feet. Or, while I am holding you down he can be loading his revolver

or unsheathing his scimitar. Or again, in case you should in a moment of fractiousness, whilst my back was turned, inflict a blow on me with some lethal weapon, Mr. Corry would be there to report it to the Consul at the nearest port, and bear witness against you. A threefold cord is not quickly broken, but if one of the strands should go, there would still be two left. . . .

I have been reading a little since I saw you. Have finished Dilke, and feel now like an embryo politician. I looked through Oliphant's *Japan*, but learned little. Edmonston and Douglas gave me M. le Baron de Hübner's *Ramble Round the World*, 2 vols., and I have picked up some information out of it.

I am at present reading about Egypt, and am really enjoying Zincke's *Egypt of the Pharaohs and the Kedivé*. It is a remarkably good book, and has taught me much. The style is very easy, not at all heavy like Hübner. Lindsay Galloway advised me to read Darwin's *Cruise of the Beagle*. It was out when I applied at College for it. You should take it out if Bryce has it. I hope to read it next week. I have tried in vain to get hold of Rutherford Alcock's *Japan*, but indeed I think I am beginning to know almost as much as there 's need for about that country. I shall, however, read all I get a hold of, and if the Ambassador at Pekin doesn't take me for a Celestial in disguise, then the representatives of Britain abroad are sharper than they are at present getting credit for. . . .

This leaves me in a state of calm joy.—Good-bye, Spurgeon.—Yours ever, BARTLE FRERE.

To the same

LOANHEAD, 21.8.76.

DEAR MR. ROBERT,—You may perhaps be thinking, and very naturally too, that consent to a change in our programme given after a few minutes' consideration is not worth very much, and that a hurried answer to your letter of the 15th argues a frivolity in dealing with affairs of com-

manding importance characteristic enough of a Disraeli, but hardly worthy of a Struthers.

I have therefore to announce that, having summoned all my wandering imaginations from afar, and having concentrated all the light of a naturally luminous intellect on the arrangement mentioned in your letter, I have arrived deliberately at the following result :—' That the addition of Mr. Corry to our party would be a very great gain.' This, of course, subject to your consent. I presume your parents have already agreed, or it never would have been mentioned. . . .

J. P. Struthers left home on 13th October 1876 to join his travelling companions in Liverpool. They were a somewhat youthful party—their ages eighteen, nineteen, and twenty-five—to undertake such a tour in those days, when the facilities for travellers were very different from what they now are. But all went well, and after visiting Egypt, India, Ceylon, Java, China, Japan, the United States, and Canada, they reached home safely towards the middle of September 1877. The following letters have been chosen from a large budget.

To Mr. David Wilson

North-Western Hotel, Liverpool,
14*th Oct.* 1876.

Dear Mr. David,—Here I am *en route* for ——. The sea is before me, but the sea which I behold is not only the Ocean of Life. We sail this afternoon.

A short letter with any news would please me mightily. I shall write you sometime or other if I am able ; if I am not able, I shall at least remember you night and morning, and all through the day. Please give my dutiful respects to Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and so farewell, old boy, and may we meet again right happily.—Yours ever,

J. P. Struthers.

To his Brother

Oct. 1876
IN THE BAY OF BISCAY.

. . . YOU get up and put on your clothes, and you are knocked down on your face. You are sick and can't rise to get into bed, and so have just to lie on the floor. I crawled into Bob Allan's cabin, and found him lying under his berth, saying he was very bad, and asking what was the good of a pith helmet to a man now.

Oct. 23, 1876.

. . . AFTER Gozo, Malta, and first of all 'the place where two seas met' (Acts xxvii. 41), and then St. Paul's Bay. The sun was just setting over the little island of Salmonetta, and such a sunset! all crimson and one streak of gold. We could not possibly have had a finer view; but unfortunately we were too late to see the rest of Malta, and had to be content with a sight of the lights of Valetta. Our captain was very anxious to have been in time to 'signalise,' and had the number ready, but it was too dark. However, we were fortunate enough to get near a small steamer bound for the harbour, and as we passed it on the starboard side, for the first time since we left England we heard a voice outside our own ship. It was in answer to our skipper.

'Ship ahoy!'
'Halloa.'
'Are you going into the harbour?'
'Yes.'
'Will you report the *City of Manchester*?'
'Are you going in?'
'No.'
'What is your name?'
'*City of Manchester.*'
'All right.'
'Thank you.'

And in a few minutes we were gone, and there was nothing

to be seen but the white and red lights. After dinner, tea and games under the awning on deck, the young moon shining peacefully, while the horizon on the west and north was brightened every minute by flashes of lightning.

Oct. 24.

READ the extracts from Smith of Jordanhill, given in Conybeare and Howson, with reference to the shipwreck of Paul in Malta, and blessed the name of Smith. I then labelled the sample of water I had taken on the spot. Was rather laughed at, but resolved to keep my sample, all the more so when I thought that no one had anything better to show.

SHEPHERD'S HOTEL, CAIRO.

ON Wednesday we went to the Pyramids. We started at five in the morning without breakfast, galloped in the dark right on with two donkey men, one of them riding and the other running, and got to the Pyramids at seven o'clock. We had each two men to help us, and it was sore work. A few of the steps are four feet high, most about two and a half or three; a few are just one, and their width is about a foot; and as we had four hundred and eighty to go up, we were pretty tired; but the coming down was far worse. We had, however, a splendid view.

Then we went inside the Pyramid, and had to crawl on our knees amid fearful dust, then be pulled up slippery inclines and along narrow tunnels, about ten Arabs singing and shouting and holding candles; and when we got out we were glad it was all over. . . .

After one and a half hours in Port Saïd, we went on board again; then into the Canal, and truly I was disappointed. Ships can only pass each other at little stations which are made every eight miles. We went as far as to Kantara, and as ships are not allowed to sail after sunset, we had to moor the ship to the shore. After dinner we went out in one of the ship's boats, rowed about two or three miles,

and played tig in the desert. Then back, and tea on deck. That afternoon I had seen three camels—the first I ever saw in my life. Early up next morning—breakfast over by 8.30. When the steam launch came out at Ismaïlia we went ashore with the pilot, very sorry to part from the *City of Manchester* and the passengers. . . .

To J. P. S. from his Father

GLASGOW, *Nov.* 11, 1876.

DEAR JOHN,—You have often been from home for a season during the past. On all such occasions we felt a want which your return alone could supply. The present separation, however, differs widely from and far outweighs all those referred to above in every point of view, especially as regards time, space, and danger. It will break the back of a year, extend to the four quarters of the Globe, and expose you to blasts and billows at sea, and the fangs and fury of land sharks on shore. The adage, 'Out of sight, out of mind,' may be true as a rule. But in our case there is an exception to the rule; every day we are thinking, speaking, guessing, and hoping about you, and the young gentlemen with you. We earnestly wish that you all may enjoy special divine protection throughout your vast tour. Your cup is brimful of blessings, and will, I am sure, enable you to sing the Lord's song within a foreign land. True you have endured sore sea-sickness, and possibly you may have many sharp pangs of home-sickness, and a large amount of severe toil before you see old Scotland. But be of good cheer. I feel persuaded you will learn many substantial lessons you could learn nowhere else; no, not even on Gilmorehill, which will, I trust, be eminently beneficial, and well fitted to qualify you for all the duties of life, and wherever Providence may cast your lot. This journey will furnish you with a fund of useful knowledge you will never forget, that you will always have cut and dry at your finger ends, ready for use whenever required, and will with judicious management prove instructive and

pleasant to others, and to us in particular. You have been a comfort to us all your days, and if it please the Most High to preserve our lives, we will prize your good company more than ever we have done. We don't know the value of water till the well is dry.

You will see the Mussulman and his mosque, the Arabian and his steed, the shepherd and his sheep, and a multitude of other curiosities too numerous to mention. You have now reached an important point of your earthly pilgrimage, which will give a tone to your future career. Surely it is for some wise end that you have been sent to foreign lands for a while, and will, I hope, be overruled for your present and eternal good. Mother is, and has been, in her ordinary health since you left, and content if you are well.—I am your affectionate father, WM. STRUTHERS.

To his Brother

BENARES, *Dec.* 25, 1876.

MY DEAR BILL,—Here I am sitting in a bare room with white-washed walls and all the proofs of heat once more. Behind me is my little bed with its white muslin mosquito curtains; behind it again is my bathroom, with its huge tub half full of water, and three earthenware pitchers after the manner of the purification of the Hindoos. The jars also are filled with water, and I am supposed to sit in the tub and empty them over my head. I am writing at a little table, and before me there is a 'tinny' full of castor oil, and in that oil there is a cotton wick, and that is all the light I have night after night. We left Sahibgunge on Thursday evening at 6.40, and after a wearisome ride of twenty hours we got safely to the sacred city of the Hindoos. . . .

Benares is the most hateful place we have been in. Its inhabitants are the worst-looking scoundrels I ever set eyes on. As this is the Jerusalem of the Hindoos, the people hate all foreigners, and are devoted to their own superstitions. As we pass along the streets, some of which

are just a yard wide, the natives go to the side so as not to touch us, and look so fierce that one really feels uncomfortable. . . .

We took a sail up and down the Ganges, and saw the pilgrims bathing. They bathe with their clothes on, and go right under the water, men, women, and children. The shore is lined with steps leading into the water. We saw a boat bringing a dead body to be burned, and we saw several dead bodies burning. A heap of logs is piled up, then the body, dressed in white or red or blue, is placed on the top and covered with fuel, and the whole is set on fire. We climbed to the top of a Mohammedan mosque, and saw all Benares from the minarets, one hundred and seventy feet high. It is a wonderful city. There are upwards of three thousand holy shrines in it. Also, there are hundreds of sacred bulls. People dare not touch them, that is, to injure them, and so the great fat brutes walk through the narrow lanes, and poke their noses into shops or wherever they like. We were in several very holy places, and saw sacred fire burning, but the whole thing was very disgusting, and what with the smell and the smoke I was heartily sick of it.

DELHI, *Dec.* 28, 1876.

ONE of my earliest recollections is passing the buildings of the Established Church Normal School at the end of Shamrock Street, and seeing a flag flying, and hearing people say, 'Delhi was taken.' That was in 1857, nineteen years and two months ago ; and now I myself am in Delhi. There is to be a great function here on New Year's Day. All the rajahs and independent princes are to make obeisance before the Viceroy, and acknowledge the Queen as Empress. The whole proceeding is condemned here. There was a great Durbar last year to meet the Prince of Wales, and the expense is very great. However, it is to be a wonderful show, and of course the English are flocking to see it. . . .

This morning I rose early, and went with Corry to see the Cashmere Gate. This was the place by which the

English entered when they recaptured Delhi. Three officers and ten soldiers rushed forward in face of the enemy, crossed a ditch and laid powder at the foot of the gate. A lieutenant tried to set fire to the fuse, but was wounded. He handed it to a sergeant, but the sergeant was shot dead. Then a third succeeded in lighting it, but was mortally wounded. I have gone out and in six times to-day, and no place has impressed me so much. . . .

We had a son of the Maharajah of Benares on the train with us, quite a young fellow. He spoke English very well. He was very anxious to look at our portmanteaux—to see inside, and know the price of them. He looked also at our clothes. It will give you an idea of Indian life when I tell you he offered to go to a second-class carriage if we objected to his company. Also, there is a notice in bedrooms as follows: 'Visitors are requested not to strike any of the servants.' He had a gold silk jacket, and a big hole in his stocking. He was the most inquisitive person I ever met, but that is due to the childishness of the native mind. The natives stick their heads out of the windows in the train just as we did when we were little.

To Mr. David Wilson

Jan. 17, 1877.
ESPLANADE HOTEL, BOMBAY.

MY DEAR DAVIDIUS,—Your letter reached me at Delhi, to which I was called in connection with the Durbar, and has kept us all in laughter ever since. You think I might have written sooner? Contemplate my position.

Here followeth statement of subscriber's position:—

In front of me is a table. But that is not all. No, Dad, I would not willingly conceal anything from you. Behind me is a window, six feet wide and twelve feet high. And the window opens, and outside the window are shutters made after the pattern of the Venetians. But they won't shut, and so a tropical sun is beating vehemently on me. Our steamer was advertised to sail next Wednesday, and word has just been sent it is to sail on Monday. Our

trunks have all to be mended, our hair to be cut. Would you have me break the Sabbath day? I know from your letter you are very solicitous about my morals, and—I won't break the Sabbath. Wait another week, and you shall get a right letter. Meantime suspend judgment. Don't say I have forgotten you. R. A. and I talk of you and Walter every day. We never forget you. But, by the way, it is not a letter you want from me; it is postage stamps, you say. Behold the collection I send on this envelope! It cost me an hour's thinking; it would have cost any other man a week's.

I shall tell you all about our ride on pony back—one hundred miles!—in my next letter. It will be a glorious one. Meantime accept my love and give my respects to Mr. and Mrs. Wilson.

You know what Newton said. He was as a child gathering pebbles—ocean of truth. I am like Newton, wise, but humble as wise. Oh that I had another letter from you. In frantic haste.

To Mr. W. Wingate Gray

Jan. 31, 1877.
ROYAL MAIL S.S. *Goa*, BRITISH INDIA CO.,
en route FOR COLOMBO.

MY DEAR WALTER,—I am in my little cabin here, all alone. Allan and Corry have gone ashore to see the sons of men. It is frightfully hot, so that I am sitting with my coat off, and, though I have newly washed my face and hands, the perspiration is running down my face and off my finger points as who should say, 'Hot pies'! A few natives, including three or four Brahmins, have just come aboard. It is the first time they have ever seen an English ship. We have had great fun watching them. They were greatly astonished at the ship's depth, and there they stood at the edge of the main hatch gazing down, now and again looking at one another, then smiling to us and touching their foreheads and saying, 'Salaam, Sahib.' One of the Brahmins, an old boy over six feet in height, and so stout

that he must be over twenty stones, was very agile. He ran down the ladder and peered into all the corners while his companions looked down at him and admired his pluck. They begged to see where the English Sahibs slept, and accordingly they were led down into the cabins. There they walked up one side and down another, and when they came on deck they looked at each other and spoke as follows :—

'Ali Khan and all ye jungle wallahs! Why should we not say that which is true and give expression to the feelings of our heart of hearts? I did not think to play the woman, but my anticipations have been completely falsified. You never heard me say before what I honestly believed, and it is the pride of our village that we tell so many lies that we don't even know when we tell them. For once let us, if possible, speak the truth.'

After a few other preliminary remarks, the chief Brahmin pronounced an elaborate eulogism on British power, saying that one might almost think Humayun was come back and Nourjehan risen from her grave; and then he concluded with a few verses of the old song :—

'Far hae I gaen and muckle hae I seen,
But boats as big as villages saw I never nane.'

At which they all said, 'Atcha!' and then proceeded to squat on the deck, having first unwound their turbans, undone their back hair, and adjusted their girdles.

You may perhaps imagine I did not know one bit what they were saying. I may simply reply that I have been in India two months almost, and it would be very strange if I hadn't picked up some of the language. Of course I can't give you a full description of all I have seen, or indeed of anything I have seen. I shall tell you only of one or two of the most memorable events.

The day after I wrote you we visited Serampore, the first missionary station in India, and saw the graves of Carey and Marshman and Ward. Serampore used to belong to the Dutch, and it was the only place missionaries were allowed to settle.

On the Tuesday we started for Darjeeling, near the Himalayas. That has been our grandest experience in India. We had a railway journey of two hundred and fifty miles or so to Sahibgunge. But I must tell you of Indian railways. There are four classes: first class, in which the compartments are very large, and the seats very broad, without arm rests as at home. The back of each seat is a cushion that lifts up and, by being supported by cords from the roof, becomes a couch. A first-class compartment holds four people, and adjoining each there is a bathroom. The windows are often made with coloured glass to shut out the glare, which is intensely painful to the eyes. In front of the window there is a protecting piece of wood, like the eaves of a house, to keep out the sun. In summer we are told travelling is an agony, and accordingly they hang out wet cocoanut mats outside the windows to cool the air. The second classes on most railways are like our thirds. There is a third class for Europeans only, and a third for natives. The engines, which are driven mostly by Europeans, have cow-lifters in front, and great awnings of twelve feet in length over the driver's head. The goods trains are driven by natives, whence it sometimes happens that accidents occur. 'The train ran past the danger signal, the driver and guard having both fallen asleep'! The stations in Bengal and the Punjaub are often fortified, but never look beautiful. In the Bombay Presidency the very opposite is the case, the stations being often covered with flowers from end to end. Whenever the train stops, you hear a man jingling two brass bowls together, and calling 'Pani.' It is the water man, who is paid by the company. . . .

At Sahibgunge we got out—3 A.M., and, after a vain attempt to sleep, walked down to the Ganges, and went on board the ferry steamer. We had a sail of thirty miles up the river. It is very broad, and of a dirty brown colour, and with no vegetation on its banks save a little rice here and there. We landed at Caragola, and, as the pier had become blocked with sand, had to walk two and a half miles

to the Dâk Bungalow, or Government Inn. After tiffin we prepared to set out. We had secured gharries beforehand, and they were waiting for us. Bob had one, Corry and I the other; and so we went off, the driver blowing his horn, and the guard or footman jumping up and down from his knife-board behind. We had two ponies in each gharry—one inside the shafts, the other quite away, with nothing to keep it in its place but a leathern strap. These ponies were changed every five or six miles, and as they were very stubborn, we had some rows. They would turn right round and haul the gharry at right angles. Then they kicked, then they stood still, and wouldn't budge till all the men and boys in the district came and shoved and the driver lashed them with all his might, when they set off at full gallop, and you were almost jolted to death.

We had a lantern inside to cheer us by night till we should feel inclined to sleep. We had one hundred and twenty-four miles of this, and it was done, including stoppages, in twenty-two or twenty-three hours. I would be a traitor to my best convictions if I said it was all fun. Now and again we had to stop to let a bullock cart get out of the way. We passed one bullock's carcase with sixty or seventy vultures feeding on it. We stopped at a place called Silligoree, had meals and a bath, and then mounted our ponies. Forty miles on horseback. J. P. on horseback! There was no help for it, and so farewell sun, moon, and ye glittering stars!

My pony, fortunately I thought, loved to go slowly. It would not trot of its own will, and I was always kind to the lower animals. At last Allan and Corry thought they would go on more quickly, and I was to follow as soon as I could get my beast to go.

We had twenty-two miles before us before dark, *i.e.* about six o'clock. They soon disappeared, and there was I, fully determined to ride hard no matter what it cost. But in an evil hour a tea-planter overtook me. His coolies were on foot carrying five thousand rupees in silver, and

as he was come to watch them, he, of course, could not go quickly, and I rather enjoyed being forced to go slow, especially as I fully believed A. and C. would wait at some turn for me. The planter at length advised me to push on, since I wouldn't come with him and spend the evening. He got one of his coolies to cut me a thorny stick; but no, my pony could hardly walk. The planter bade me good-bye and went off a bypath to his bungalow, and there was I, fourteen miles from Kurseang, my thorn stick broken over my pony's back, in the very middle of the Terai just before sunset, all alone. The Terai, you know, is one of the worst jungle places in India, a regular fever district, cleared practically, but not unvisited by the tiger. The road was good, but there were the jungle and the thick tiger-grass at each side, and with the setting of the sun the hum of forest life fell on my ear. Such chirping and whistling and hissing of all sorts, and yet, although it was like to deafen one, there was a strange silence. On I plodded, but my pony, after zigzagging up the road for a mile, began to make as though it would lie down. I had to dismount and pull it after me. Still, thirteen miles to do in the dark. I did not know the way, and I couldn't ask it. Two miles I went on till at length it was pitch dark; still on, and now, on rounding a corner, I came on a native encampment, fires blazing on every side and dark forms sitting jabbering around them. I could trace the road no longer, and, fearing I should go astray, determined to wait for our baggage ponies, which I thought might be only a few miles off. I waited some time, and then two natives came and seized my pony. I could not make out what they said, but at last got the word 'syce.' Then it struck me they were the grooms who were to take back our horses. We trudged on, the two syces following six yards off, talking low to each other. At last I heard a horse's hoofs in the distance, and then there came up an English rider. I told him I was going to Kurseang, whereupon a loud laugh laughed he. It would take me seven hours, all up hill, precipices on every side; if I missed my footing, it was a question of

'kingdom come'; with other information of a like encouraging nature. I must stay over night at Punkabarra, which was three miles ahead, up hill, and so 'good-bye.' It was a long three miles, particularly the last half mile, which was at an angle of thirty-five degrees, over rough stones and bridges with mighty holes in them. But all of a sudden I came to a bend, and there were lights and a man at a door. 'Dâk Bungalow?' I said. 'Atcha, sahib,' and in I went, but determined if A. and C. were not there I should go on to Kurseang. I was taken to a room, and on my way thought I saw two fellows like my friends—but no; turned back to see, and it was them (admire the grammar, but grammar is nowhere in emergencies) after all! They had been in great anxiety. Their own ponies had broken down, but some one had told them that their Scotch friend was coming on, and they thought it best not to turn back, in case of missing each other. We were very glad to meet, and determined never to part company again. It seems a small adventure, but it made us all feel very queer, and we said nothing about it in our letters home.

Next morning we set off again, upwards and onwards, and in six miles had ascended upwards of three thousand feet. That took us almost four hours, but the time passed most pleasantly. We had always a valley on one side of us, and the valleys were filled with mist. We looked down hundreds of feet, and could see the tall tops of the trees peering through the gloom. We changed horses at Kurseang, and then had about twenty miles before us. Vegetation glorious, and indeed it was worth coming all the way from England to see the tree-ferns and the wonderful creepers.

At length the mist cleared away, and there stood before us, white with everlasting snow, the top of Kinchinjunga. I need scarcely tell you that to look at it over the ten ranges of intervening mountains, that ever rose higher and higher the nearer they came to Kinchinjunga, was our chief occupation for three days. When we went to church on Sabbath

and heard in the morning service that 'the strength of hills is His also,' we got a new idea of the words. They were away up in the clouds, those hills, with an awful barrier look about them, and yet they rose so gradually you felt God could have made mountains twice as high. There was no feeling of effort about them at all. We were strongly advised to ascend Mt. Sinchal and the Tiger Hill, from which Mt. Everest, the highest mountain in the world, is seen, but were told we must set out very early in the morning. However, one of us was too lazy, and we only started after breakfast, with six miles steady ascent to do on horseback. We were rewarded better than we deserved. We had a magnificent view. It shone like silver in the heavens.

We look back on that visit as our greatest pleasure in India. We were told afterwards that it was made at what is usually the worst season, and that we might have waited three months and not seen what we did.

The cold at Darjeeling is very great. We had fires every night and ice in the morning.

From Calcutta, till at Allahabad on our way back, the nights were bitterly cold. In spite of all our wraps we shivered in the railway carriages.

I must reserve an account of our return from Darjeeling for Dad.

Of course you would like to hear somewhat about the Durbar. It was a spectacle such, I suppose, as the world has not seen since the Queen of Sheba came to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Imagine a chief with £100,000 worth of diamonds in his hat, riding in a solid silver howdah on the top of an elephant whose trappings were mostly of pure gold; imagine five hundred and seventeen camels following him in single file; after the camels, horses with silk and silver and ivory mountings, ridden by natives whose hair was in a state of disorder unimaginable, their naked feet sticking out of heelless slippers; imagine five hundred times all this, and you have an idea of what Delhi was at the Durbar. What the ultimate effect of the pro-

clamation will be nobody can tell. It has sunk a good many of the native chiefs deeper in debt than ever, and the poor villagers will be taxed to lighten it.

I am longing to hear about your Philosophy work. God bless you. Please give my respects to Mrs. Gray. How did the old women's treat get on without me?—Yours, as ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. David Wilson

ROYAL MAIL BRITISH INDIA S.S. *Goa*,
OFF CAPE COMORIN,
Monday, Feb. 5, 1877.

MY DEAR DAD,—I have just left the bath four minutes ago, and have put on a new *toga virilis, vulgò* shirt, and yet already the dewdrops are forming on my noble brow. And all this takes place nine degrees from the Equator and in the winter season. In a few weeks we hope to be at Singapore, seventy miles from said Equator, where there is no distinction of summer and winter, and where I presume the whole 'dewty' of man is to eat, drink and perspire, especially perspire. I assure you this is a serious business, O Dad—to find oneself doing nothing and yet dwindling away. It puts a premium on idleness, and precludes heroic action. This voyage is tolerably tedious. We anchor every few miles and look through opera-glasses at Portuguese settlements a league off. We have to wait at the very least three hours till they get the mails, and then once more we sail past the long plantations of cocoanut trees reaching apparently to the water's edge. I have seen the day when one hundred and fifty miles of cocoanuts ten miles deep would have seemed almost as an idea of Paradise; let me beseech you, who are still young, to abandon all illusions; fling away ambition; by that sin fell the angels, etc., etc. The man whose most avaricious dream is a few jugers and a flowing stream not even the cocoanuts of the Moguls would content, or a bison bronzed in the valleys of the malarious Nilgherries. Nothing but the love of truth will satisfy the soul, and even that

fails apparently in most cases in which it is tried. Six weeks ago it was not cocoanuts we saw as we rushed past at twenty miles an hour in the sandy, dusty expresses of the north. It was the castor-oil plant that adorned the horizon and filled the eye. You, if you know anything of the effects of an Indian climate, will not be foolish enough to suppose that that oil is raised for home (*i.e.* Indian, of course) consumption. And yet, after all, I am wrong. What was it that prevented me from writing long letters at night to you but simply this, that all the light we had was given by a little wick suspended in a tumbler full of that oil, that gave most of us in our early days the most vivid evidence of the prevalence of sin?

I must tell you of our return from Darjeeling, whither we had gone from Calcutta to see the highest peaks of the Himalayas. After a sail on the treacherous (by reason of its shifting sands) Ganges, we drove one hundred and twenty-four miles in gharries, forty-one more on horseback, and another ride of ten to get to the top of a hill whence Mt. Everest could be seen. Our stay in the icy north was delightful, though short. We set out on our forty-one miles downhill on horseback to return, and got on tolerably well. That is to say, I was nearly thrown only three times, and was beginning to get proud and exalt my head, when in an evil hour R. S. A., at my instigation, he says, hired private gharries instead of Government ones, thereby effecting a saving of forty rupees or £4. We got on well enough for the first sixty or seventy miles, there being no bother except the usual plunging and kicking and buck-jumping every eight miles or so, when we changed our little Australian ponies. But about two o'clock in the morning Corry and I, who shared one between us, were sleeping, perhaps dreaming of home, when all on a sudden the gharry stopped, and we were told our conveyance was breaking up and we must get out. So far good. We got into another—we had stopped at a station—and settled down. Corry was fast asleep. I, having no room to lie down, was generously sitting up in the

corner, thinking of truth in its various aspects, or perhaps uttering some of my better known sayings such as—'In essentials unity; in non-essentials forbearance; in all things charity.' Then at the dead hour of the night the gharry seemed to be going upwards, as if bound for the Olympian heights; then it seemed to be going downwards, and I began to think of crying, Solon, Solon, but before the words were out of my mouth, crash, bang went the gharry right over. Corry landed on the top of me and began groping for the light like an infant crying in the night. But St. Ruthers to the rescue! He opened the door above us, and having let Corry crawl out, came out himself leisurely and proceeded to make an investigation. We had gone right over the bank, and the gharry was lying by no means improved. Our native servant, who had been sleeping on the top, got his nose badly skinned; the driver lay moaning on the ground. Being but a short time in India, I thought he was hurt, if not killed outright; and lifted him tenderly, as who should impress a heathen with the gentleness of Christians. Later on in the day Bob gave him a rupee. The man's version was that he had got a pony that had never been in harness before. The truth was—he was fast asleep. And this leads me to remark that all men are liars here—the English, *i.e.* some of them, as at home, if it is to their advantage; the natives, whether or no. I would have given a good deal to have thrashed a few of my Hindoo brethren.

We have had considerable fun bargaining with them. R. S. A., at Lahore, wished to buy a dressing-gown. 'How much?' 'Thirty-five rupee,' says Ali Bhas Khan. 'Jao,' says R. S. A., which interpreted means, 'Go away.' 'How much you give, sahib?' 'Seventeen rupee,' says Bob, as he sits down to a letter he was writing. Instantly Ali packs up all his goods as if some great reverse in life had happened and walks off. At the door he says, 'How much, sahib?' 'Seventeen rupee.' 'Nai, nai, sahib—thirty-four rupee.' R. S. A. kneels down and packs his bag. Ali thinks he has not many more chances. 'I give it for

thirty-three rupee.' 'Seventeen,' says Bob. 'Good-bye, sahib—I name one price—thirty-three rupee. What price you name?' 'Seventeen!' Ali goes away. Reappears in five minutes. 'I give you two gowns, sahib, for sixty rupee.' 'Don't want two. Seventeen for one.' Bob closes one half of his bag, and he and I indulge in a little ordinary conversation (for us, that is; for others, philosophical and profound would be the word). Suffice it to say—R. S. A. got it in three-quarters of an hour for seventeen and a half rupees, and all the time this Ali was a merchant with perhaps 3000 or 4000 pounds' worth of things lying on the floor—Ali who is the great Cashmere shawl merchant in Lahore.

We were at Delhi for ten days, and saw such things as the world never probably saw before. All the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind was gathered there. One elephant's trappings would have completed the University buildings and built the Common Hall besides. The great treat was the presence of so many really gallant soldiers; the best fun was the bolting of the elephants, with the crowded howdahs on their backs, when the soldiers fired their *feu de joie*. The whole ceremony was a farce—at least most people think so—but a very brilliant farce. . . .

You see how little I have told you, but I shall write again soon, not to give you interesting letters, for we are too hurried for that, but to show I remember you and yours.—Dear old boy, yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

Letters to Home

Friday, March 2, 1877.
(Bound for Java.)

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—In a few minutes we shall be crossing the Line, and for a week or two, instead of looking south to see the sun, I shall have to look north.

I am more than ever assured that this voyage was the best thing that could have happened to me. It has given

me time to think and to notice a great many faults and habits I had fallen into before I left home. I do most earnestly hope I may make a good use of my splendid opportunities. I feel somehow as if I had been an apprentice and then promoted to be a workman, then sent back to be an apprentice a little longer that I might be all the better workman hereafter.

JAVA, *March* 12, 1877.

JAVA is said to be one of the most thickly populated countries in the world, and we were much struck with the vast numbers of people on the road. To-day I counted them for three miles in the morning. 1st mile: 96 people, 15 waggons, each drawn by 2 ponies. 2nd mile: 108 people, 20 horses. 3rd mile: 37 men bearing burdens, 32 walking, 10 women, 10 waggons, 33 horses. There is no railway here, so all traffic has to be done on the roads.

March 12, 1877.

WE got into Bandong about four o'clock, and found ourselves the only lodgers, with the exception of an elderly Dutch gentleman. By gestures we made arrangements to start next morning at six o'clock for Tangkaeban Prahoe. This was the excursion we came here to make. We thought it might be our only chance of seeing a volcano not extinct. [Here follows a description of the ascent of two thousand feet by steeper roads than had ever been traversed by any of the party.] Next to our view of the Himalayas, it is the most wonderful thing we have yet seen. All of a sudden we saw a huge hole in the mountain, three to four hundred yards wide. The far-off side was the one we saw, and it was all white as if with hoar frost. There was a little bungalow at the end of our path, and when we got there and dismounted we looked over the edge of the cliff, and far below, and right in front of us, were the two craters of Tangkaeban Prahoe, one of the most interesting of the volcanoes in Java. They were round, just like a basin, five or six hundred feet deep. They were divided by a high ridge of ashes. The edges, or sides rather,

were covered a third of the way down with living juniper bushes. I could not help thinking of the verse :—

'What shall be given thee ? or what shall
Be done to thee, false tongue ?
Ev'n burning coals of juniper,
Sharp arrows of the strong.'

Below the juniper bushes was a tract of trees destitute of leaves and bark, and so brittle, as we afterwards found, that if you gripped one much thicker than your arm it snapped clean off. Below these the remainder of the crater was white as snow. Right in the centre at the bottom there was what seemed to be a lake of water, only it was yellow—it was a lake of brimstone. We had been told beforehand it was quite safe to go down, and so we went, Allan leading. At first we went over red ashes. It was very rough work, and we had to go slowly. This was the region of living juniper ; after it, came the dead branches and withered trees, the pathway yielding more readily than ever, the ground being now white, brittle ashes. When we got so far, we could see right into the very centre, and found that what we had taken for mist was smoke. We still had one or two hundred feet to go down, and we did this very carefully. The ashes we now walked on crumbled under our feet like magnesia. As we got down we saw a truly awful sight. In a corner that had been hidden from us there was a great rush of smoke, and when we got round so as to have a view of it, there was the side of the hill all yellow brimstone. As we were gazing we saw ever so many vent-holes, with steam or smoke pouring out. We crept up to one, and put our hands at the mouth and got our fingers scalded as at a boiling kettle. The hill was full of these holes. In the great hollow there was a lake of sulphur and water, boiling and bubbling and hissing ; indeed, it boiled so hard that the water was splashing up against the sides. It was terribly hard work scrambling up out of the crater. We had to lie down eight or nine times. Half-way up there was a most wonderful echo. The voice died away altogether, and then came back louder

and louder. The fact was it went round the basin till it returned to us. It was not such a sweet echo, but a much more extraordinary one than we heard in the Taj.

This day's experience is one I shall never forget. I thought I was almost like Bunyan getting a sight of the bad place through the hole that was in the side of the hill. I felt that one more sermon had been preached to me to repent and flee from the wrath to come. And when Allan and I walked back for a bit arm-in-arm, I thought of you all, and of myself, and of the last day. . . .

S.S. *Haining, April* 13, 1877.

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—The captain and I have had a great many chats. He seems a most lovable man and remarkably intelligent. He is intensely fond of his profession, and never had the slightest wish to give up a sea life. Our ship is taking up cargo to Chefoo and Tientsin. The river Peiho is blocked with ice for three months, till March, and then there is a great rush as to which will be the first ship. The captain says there is nothing finer to be seen than the huge masses of ice glittering in the sun, and when the ship strikes them, and the little bits fly up and shine like gold in the sunlight, it is a lovely scene. We have one hundred and twenty chests of opium on board, each chest worth £120. The opium trade, it seems, is now almost entirely in the hands of Jews. Our cargo belongs to the well-known David Sassoon. We have a very happy time on board, make great fun of each other [they had been joined by two young Englishmen who had been travelling for two years], and pass the time very cheerily. It is now by our time ten minutes to three. That is six months and thirty-five minutes since I left home. We have been wonderfully happy every way, and if all goes well I hope before another six months have gone I shall once more be with you.

Money here is very cumbersome. We each have two bags of dollars—a dollar is as large as a five-shilling piece; a dollar=nine hundred cash, cash being little dirty pieces

of brass, differing in size between a farthing and a half-penny. Each coin has a hole in it, by which they are strung on a long string. When they pay anything they slip off as many as they wish. The man selling fish got perhaps seventy or eighty of these, which he picked up and put in his sleeve. Then half-way down the ladder at the side of our ship, he held his sleeve over his own little boat, and let the money run into the bottom. We were much amused, and when the Chinamen noticed we were watching them they laughed heartily. They are always ready for a joke.

[Description of an inn on the way from Tientsin to Pekin.]

The inn was a very primitive place, dirtier than the dirtiest farmyard you ever saw. We entered through a big gate into a square court full of carts and mules and idle men; we dismounted and were shown to our room, and such a room! Twelve feet square, with two other rooms opening off it rather less in size. The building was of mud, with a huge trunk of a tree for a rafter. The roof was vaulted, painted a dark grey with white stripes to represent bricks, and the windows had small panes made of thin white paper. One side of the room was raised three feet high, built of brick and covered with thin matting. Underneath there are little ovens, and in cold weather they light fires in them, and you sleep on the top!! One of our carts came up—happily the one with provisions—and while they were preparing a meal we washed our faces in little wooden bickers. The table was spread, and we sat down—two on the bed, two on chairs, and one on a trestle, such as masons use, only small. We had tinned meat with us, bread and salt butter, and we got apples and pears, chickens, potatoes and eggs to buy in the village. We had a splendid picnic.

[After leaving this inn a sand-storm was encountered, which obliged the party to turn back.]

We turned into a somewhat cleaner inn, which was the very same in shape and structure as the last. We were very tired. Four of us agreed to sleep in one room, a few feet from each other. I undressed, put on two suits of pyjamas, wrapped a plaid round me, and put a waterproof over my feet and my small portmanteau under my head, and, after thinking of you all, fell asleep. I wakened once or twice—once to find Corry, who was sleeping next me, putting one of his coats over me, and tucking the waterproof round my feet.

Next morning we were off by 7.30, and never halted, except to give our horses water, till we arrived about midday at Ho-hei-wa, where we managed to get rooms worse than the last. After lunch we started again and made for Mat'ou. I was now beginning to enjoy riding, and found the time pass very pleasantly away, till we reached our inn and encamped for the night. Our compartments were worse than ever. In the middle of our bed there was a great hole, where several bricks had tumbled out. We got two or three new ones put in, and off to sleep once more.

. . . At last we came to Pekin. At the gate we found many people loitering, but passed through, our passports, which cost us a dollar each, got from the Consul in Tientsin, being never asked for. This took us through the first wall into the Chinese City. We rode a mile and a half, and came to the outer gate, which led into the Tartar City. Here there was a tremendous jam of carts, horses and mules, and we had considerable difficulty in getting through. We did, however, get through, and came into a large square, and then there was another gate, but not so great a crowd. We turned up some side streets, and down a narrow lane, till we came to a big gate. So we knocked, and one opened, who asked us whence we had come and what we would. Then we told him of our journey, and that we wished to remain in his house, whereupon he bade us welcome and gave orders that we should be housed ; and so it came to pass we entered within the gates and dwelt in the Celestial City.

We came to the outer gate of the Temple of Heaven, *the* great place in China. At its gate there were no shining ones, but the very dirtiest Chinamen I ever saw. Admission is strictly forbidden by the Chinese law, but the priests are willing to let visitors enter if they pay enough of money.

We walked along the marble road that leads to the great altar, on which twice a year the Emperor offers sacrifice. The road was in shameful order, like the sluggard's garden, all overgrown with weeds. The altar has three circular terraces, all of marble. In the centre of the upper one there is a round stone on which the Emperor kneels, and beside it is a raised altar open to the sky. Everything was as dirty and untidy as could be. On the top of the altar, on the grating, were lying pieces of bone, and skin, and hair, the remains of the bullock that had been burnt on the 22nd December previous. I thought it was very unlike the way God's altar was kept long ago by His priests. Nothing of the sacrifice was left there, even for one day. Everything was clean and bright and beautiful—a picture of heaven. Last of all we went to a great well full of water as clear as crystal. It is the only good water to be got near Pekin, and we drank of it and were refreshed. . . .

HAITIEN, 10 MILES NORTH OF PEKIN,
April 23, 1877.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,—In my letter from Pekin I described our journey there on horseback from Tientsin (the distance is eighty miles), how we fared, and what entertainment we had by the way. The letter has been sent by way of Mongolia, Siberia, and Russia. I do not know whether it will ever reach you, but when I heard it was customary to send letters through the Russian Legation, I thought it would be nice for you to get a letter that had come all the way through Asia. It will be carried by couriers on camels and dromedaries and mules, and will be delivered in about the same time as it would take to go by way of Shanghai and Brindisi. There is no railway on

the way until it reaches the frontiers of Russia. And now, if you turn up Esther viii. 10-14, you will be able to compare me with King Ahasuerus, and I hope that whensoever my letter arrives, you will have joy and gladness, a feast and a good day.

The Chinese, it seems, are not allowed to go up on the Great Wall, although foreigners are. We paid twenty or thirty cash, and then got up near the gate. The height of the wall varies from fifteen to thirty feet. When we reached the top we were quite amazed. It is twenty-five feet broad at its base, and about fifteen at the top. The way was paved with stones, and on each side there were bulwarks eight feet high, with embrasures every twelve or fourteen feet, through which we could look down on the city in either direction. In the middle of the wall the way was quite clear; at the sides there was grass, with roots of bushes cropping up, showing that underneath the stone there was mud. There was a pagoda tower every few hundred yards, containing old guns. We saw where our troops had battered the city. We went on till we came to the Observatory. From the walls we could see the Emperor's Palace in the Forbidden City—a place into which no Chinese or Europeans are ever admitted. It is reserved for Court officials. . . .

TOKIO, *Sat. evening, June* 9.

. . . WE left for Tokio, or Yedo, at midday on Wednesday, and had for travelling companions six Japs, dressed like Englishmen—one in native costume, with his wife, who put her shoes on the floor and sat on her heels on the seat. The journey was of fifty minutes' duration, the distance being eighteen miles. When we were half-way the lady took lunch—a hard-boiled egg which she had in her pocket. The Japs take about eight or nine meals every day, never much at a time. Our coolies stop at every village, and drink tea. When we were driving in the coach, every two miles or so we stopped, and people brought out tea and sweetmeats, and a charcoal fire for our pipes, and were

much surprised that we took nothing. Our coolies as a rule only rest for a few minutes, but if they are very hungry we may halt for twenty or so. Every tea-house is open to the street. There are no windows, and only low wooden couches or shelves, which reach back for fifty or sixty feet. These shelves are covered with straw mats, beautifully fitted and finished. Those at the door are generally quite plain. The coolies come running in with the jinrikishas. The owner of the tea-house, his wife and servant, bow and say, 'Ohio,' that is, Good-morning. The charcoal fire is brought out, and cups of tea brought within half a minute, without sugar, and very bitter—not so good as the Chinese tea.

If we want lunch we take off our boots and walk across the mats to the far end, and then pull the sliding doors all round till we find ourselves in a little room. Meantime, the coolies are taking tea. Then, as we often employ ten, there isn't rice ready. Sticks are put on the fire, and the kettle made to boil. The landlady fans the fire or blows through a hollow bamboo, the coolies all the time laughing and chatting, and the crowd in the street staring in to catch a sight of us through a half-open screen. When the water boils, the landlady throws in a lot of rice, and in ten minutes or so it is ready. A servant puts out a number of little bowls, holding rather more than an ordinary tea-cup. Each coolie gets one, and putting the bowl to his lips, shovels the rice in with his chop-sticks, which he holds, both in one hand, between his forefinger and thumb. Chop-sticks are thin pieces of wood a little longer but not so thick as lead pencils. Some of the coolies add hot water and others cold. Others go to a little cupboard where there are bowls of sourish vegetables, lift out a piece or two with their chop-sticks, and whisk it into their mouths. Meantime other travellers (Japs, of course) have dropt in. They too get rice and tea, and one or two smokes, each smoke consisting of three whiffs. When all are ready, we start off amid profound bowings and cries of 'Sayonara'=Good-bye.

CLIFTON HOUSE, NIAGARA FALLS,
Sept. 1, 1877.

. . . I HAVE been greatly delighted with Niagara. A. and C. have gone to Hamilton to call on a cousin of their grandmother's, so I was left alone, and have had a fine time among the Falls. I crossed in a small boat a few yards below them, took off all my clothes, put on a bathing suit, paid a dollar and got a guide. We went into a place called the 'Cave of the Winds,' behind the Falls. I was glad to get out again. One could hardly breathe, and the spray was blinding. But I saw a glorious circular rainbow—a complete circle. It made one think, when the waters roar and the seas swell, God has His throne upon the waters, and the believer stands in a cleft of the rock and sees a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like to an emerald.

I have many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto you. But I trust I shall shortly see you, and we shall speak face to face.—The last epistle of

JOHN.

CHAPTER V

LETTERS BEFORE AND DURING WHITHORN MINISTRY
1878–1881

'A minister of the Gospel ought to be one of Christ's making if he would pass for one of Christ's ministers. That minister who is not the model of his doctrine is a babbler rather than a preacher, a quack rather than a physician.'—WILLIAM PENN.

To Mr. David Wilson

(When Mr. Walter W. Gray and J. P. S. proposed a visit to Paris.)

33 SHAMROCK ST., GLASGOW,
May 2, 1878.

MY DEAR DAD,—W. W. G. has asked me to let you know that we have got rooms wherein to rest our wearied bodies and perturbed souls—to say nothing of my mind—in the Hôtel de Lille et d'Albion. If you have any information, or news, or good advice, you may so address—Rue St.-Honoré.

After I parted with you I changed my carriage at Stirling. I had for my companions an English traveller, two Scotchmen, and a Scotch woman. The E. T. began to talk about Easter, whence gradually the talk got on to religion. God was a subjective idea, he said. Our duty to Christ was to gather from the New Testament all that was lovable, and assimilate it. The highest aim in life was the happiness of the greatest number. That, and not theology, was worth living for. Ministers were a bad lot; catch them lending a helping hand to a poor devil or giving him a lift if he needed it. Of course, I stuck up to the best of my power—saying nothing of myself. As we got near Glasgow, he

advised me to read a little—Whately and J. S. Mill—and I would get an idea or two more than was in the Shorter Catechism. I asked him if he had read Mill's *Autobiography*. He said he had. Did it give him a good idea of a noble life? He said it did. Magnificent fellow, Mill! I should read him a bit. 'Well,' I said, 'I 've read a good deal of Mill, and the first time you see his book *Liberty*, turn to about the middle, and you 'll find a footnote in which Mill says, "It is the Shorter Catechism and the careful study of the Bible that have so sharpened Scotchmen's wits as to make them the first mental philosophers," etc., etc. And as for his *Life*, I thought his best friends were ashamed of its vanity and self-conceit, ashamed of what it tells, more so of what it conceals—witness the silent contempt with which he treats his mother. No,' I said, 'read the *Autobiography* again, and you 'll understand why none were pleased at the publishing of it except his enemies. . . .'

To the same

(*After return from Paris*)

June 12.

. . . We had a fine crossing, neither of us sick, though the number of woebegone individuals lying on their backs in all varieties of angle made the saloon look like the main street of Pompeii during the eruption of Vesuvius. We had a pleasant time in London. Sir W. Corry took W. and his cousin to the House of Lords, where they heard Beaconsfield (whose right name, by the by, old villain that he is, it is well beknown to be Disraeli); me he took for to hear Hartington and Harcourt in the Lower House. I was miserably disappointed with the speaking. I was sorry Gladstone did not speak, but, in the language of a German who sat beside me, 'I was pleased to have him seen.'

Write me a line or two; tell me especially about the crickets, and believe me, yours ever,

J. P. Struthers.

I see from *Land and Water* that a captain (Donald) made a wonderful catch—ran fifteen yards under the ball, and

caught it high up, six inches from a wall. Mr. W. Grace presented him with the ball, which is to be mounted and inscribed. I don't think you got the ball you caught at Livilands, and you ran far more than fifteen yards.[1]

To Mr. P. Wither, Awhirk, Stranraer

(In answer to a letter expressing the hope that J. P. S. would accept a call from the Original Secession Church, Stranraer.)[2]

33 SHAMROCK ST., GLASGOW
May 30, 1878.

MY DEAR MR. WITHER,—. . . If I should visit Stranraer again I would be greatly pleased to be asked to give an address in the schoolroom. If you thought my doing

[1] It gave J. P. S. great pleasure to tell to Mr. Wilson's four boys, all keen cricketers from childhood, of this wonderful 'catch' of their father's when he was a lad, and of the cheering that followed it, and to watch their eager faces.

(Since these last words were written, it has happened, as in countless other homes, that the eldest dearly loved son, having barely crossed the threshold of manhood, was killed on one of the battlefields of France, aged nineteen years.)

[2] Mr. Wither belonged to the Reformed Presbyterian (or Cameronian) Church, Stranraer, to which the Rev. Thomas Easton ministered for thirty-seven years (1850-87). Both Mr. Easton and his congregation had refused to follow their Synod (that of the Reformed Presbyterian Majority) in uniting with the Free Church of Scotland in 1876. The Stranraer Reformed Presbyterian congregation is now incorporated with the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. It may make the above letter, and possibly others, more intelligible to some readers if it is explained that the Reformed Presbyterians, sometimes called Covenanters, while welcoming in 1688 the ending of persecution, and the deliverance of Britain from the tyranny of the Stuarts, were not satisfied with the Revolution Settlement, in which the State reserved for itself a control over the Church incompatible, in their opinion, with its spiritual liberty. They still held to the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant which the Three Kingdoms had made with God and one another, and which, on the Restoration of Charles II., when he apprehended that Presbyterianism was opposed to his views on the 'divine right of kings,' were disowned by his command as 'treasonable' and 'unlawful' deeds. The Covenanters refused to join the Scottish Established Church, considering themselves bound by oath to admit no encroachments by the State on the Church's spiritual independence under Jesus Christ, its only Head. In 1733 a large party separated from the State Church of Scotland on the question of patronage, and formed a communion generally

so advisable the exertion would not be too much for me.[1]

As to the main object of your writing to me, I fear the breaking off of the union negotiations renders any chance of my coming to Stranraer impossible. For myself, union to-morrow would be my greatest joy; but at the same time I do not think I would be justified in affirming our Church to be in the wrong, as I would be doing were I to join the Seceders. Our little Church has stood out for a long time, showing as practically as it could its disapproval of the principles by which our nation has chosen to be guided. If we have erred, we have erred on the right side. And I cannot help thinking our Parliament's records go a great way to justify our Church's action. Members of the House of Commons are guided, they themselves say necessarily, by their party connections, and not by any unchanging principle of right. When a man votes for a member of Parliament he never knows what questions of home or foreign policy may arise before that member's term of office expires. The action taken by many members in the later sessions of a Parliament has often more than neutralised that which was taken in the earlier. Many who supported the Tories in the election that followed the defeat

known as Seceders. Later the Seceders differed on matters affecting the relation between Church and State, and division was followed by subdivision, which again was succeeded by the union of some of the parts, leaving, however, the body now known as the United Original Secession, which is the present sole distinct representative of the Secession principles. It was from this denomination's congregation at Stranraer that a call to J. P. Struthers was proposed in 1878. The differences between the Secession Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church are not great, the practical distinction being that while both Churches profess adherence to the Covenants of their fathers, and lay claim accordingly to the name of Covenanters, the Seceders consider it not inconsistent to vote for members of Parliament, while Reformed Presbyterians hold that by doing so they would be supporting a political basis not in keeping with their Covenants. There had been a desire that the two Churches should unite, but union had not been effected.

[1] The address was to be given on a Sabbath evening; the schoolhouse was some miles from Stranraer, and J. P. S. habitually forbade himself the use of a horse on the Sabbath.

of the Liberal Reform Bill in '66 never contemplated the sweeping measures of '67. Many who favoured Mr. Gladstone's opposition to Prelacy in Ireland never imagined the man they loved would virtually endow Popery for ever. And without expressing any opinion of my own on the Eastern Question, there are many who lent their aid to the Conservative Party at the last election, thinking thereby to strengthen the party of national religion, who would have voted very differently had they thought that party would so act as, in their opinion, to lend new life and strength to the False Prophet and his system.

I know you will pardon me for making such a long reference to a matter on which you have spent much more time and much greater thought than I have done, but my object was simply to show that I could not take a step individually that would pronounce our Church's action wholly in the wrong. I fear God has such a controversy with our nation that we have everything to look for to His Providence, and nothing to our prescience; and the best God's people can do is perhaps to pray that He will make the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrain the remainder of that wrath.

You will readily believe it is with the greatest sorrow I have come to my decision. Your feelings as a Covenanter in your present lonely position must be very acute. I assure you mine are not much less so. To be a probationer in any Church is not the happiest position; least so in ours. To be settled anywhere would be an honour; to be settled in Stranraer would be as pleasant as honourable. I could have wished it, too, for the sake of my father and mother, especially my mother. So sorry are they at the obstacles in my way that I dare not tell them all I think and know of the people of Stranraer. I know I shall never see their like again. Their kindness has made this year one of the brightest in my life.

You will not fail to give my kindest regards and most dutiful respects to all the members of your family. And for yourself accept once more my heartiest thanks for all

your kindness to me, and especially for this last act of generous and loving confidence.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

33 SHAMROCK ST., GLASGOW,
11*th June* 1878.

DEAR MR. WITHER,—I duly received your kind letter of the 6th inst. You have no need to apologise for anything, except perhaps the shortness of your communications.

The Disestablishment of the Irish Church is certainly, at least at first sight, a very strong argument in favour of your position, and I can quite understand how it seems to you to justify the taking of the Oath of Allegiance. Does it not rather go to show the low standard of morality in the matter of oath-taking prevalent amongst members of Parliament? The fact that they have no scruples in meddling with any part of the Constitution proves that the Oath of Allegiance—which is as solemn as an oath can be—either means nothing in itself or nothing in the estimation of those who take it. Again, though Parliament, under the influence of Gladstone—whose Romish leanings and consequent Jesuitical subtlety of mind were much stronger then than they apparently are now—though Parliament by a majority disestablished the Church, the most eminent members of the Conservative Party, headed by their chief, the late Lord Derby, solemnly protested, and caused their protest to be entered on the records of the House of Lords—a proceeding, I should say, almost unique in Parliamentary history. Again, it may be said that the oath is simply a promise not to alter the Constitution by other than Constitutional means. This is the third position. The first is that of the Roman Catholic members, and it may be some others, who would swear anything and mean nothing when they swear; the second position is that of the genuine Tories who think no alteration justifiable; the third is that held by Nonconformists and others, who, while enemies to the Constitution, at least in so far

as Church establishments are concerned, condemn these establishments, and so seek to overturn the Constitution so far merely on the ground of policy, or expediency, or political economy, or something or other of that sort, and not on the ground of principle in the sight of God. Such persons fought against the Irish Church, not because Episcopacy was unscriptural. They affirmed, on the contrary, it was as scriptural as any other form of Church government, but that its maintenance by the State was impolitic. And therefore these persons, holding that some things in the Constitution were capable of improvement, could still take the oath with a clear conscience, in their opinion, because they did not regard these things as sinful. The Cameronians look on the Constitution as a matter of essential right or wrong. Many regard it just as they would the fixing of a march line, or the erection of a boundary between two parishes, or the passing of a railway bill.

You remark—'It is said, falsely perhaps, that many of your people vote.' I can honestly affirm that I never knew of any one doing it, or heard any of our people hinting that they knew it either. If any do it, why, of course, they may be doing what they think right in itself; but they are guilty of a breach of faith as long as they profess to be Old Light Cameronians.

You say that discipline on account of voting lowers the estimation and sacredness with which discipline should be regarded. Not so, of course, if voting implies what our Church so long held it to imply—any more than the fact that our first parents and all their posterity were driven out of Paradise simply for eating the forbidden fruit should lower the estimation and sacredness in which the moral character of God should be regarded. A very harmless-looking act may involve the most sacred of principles. What was it one of the Covenanters said about 'God save the King'?

The stand our Church has made so long in holding out against active participation in Government does seem to me a very noble testimony in Christ's honour, and a more

powerful condemnation of the nation's conduct than the stand made by our brethren the Seceders, and this, I think, has been shown in the condemnation by the former of the conduct of the Irish Seceders in accepting *regium donum*, and when it was taken away accepting a commutation of it. And the world, although it laughs at our position, believes it more thoroughgoing.

I confess I cannot agree with you in your view of our going to law. I say nothing of the wisdom of the course, but I think it possible to grant that a *status quo* is a *status quo*, that an accomplished fact is an accomplished fact, without committing oneself to the righteousness of one or other. Say what we like, our judges are our judges, the law is our law; but to say that, and to treat them so, does not imply our approval of their constitution or enactments. A man may pay money under protest, and not allow the justice of a claim. To make a matter of opinion a ground of discipline is certainly a solemn step, but it is one every Church takes. Your principle would prove too much therefore. What would justify expulsion from the Church here would not do so in the Sandwich Islands. A convert there might have very erroneous opinions, he might not even have heard 'whether there be a Holy Spirit or no.' Such a question as that, much less one as to the Mosaic authorship and divine inspiration of Deuteronomy, could not be made a matter of moment in his case. But to Scotland much has been given, and much shall be required. You would not think it right for a man to be allowed to call himself a Seceder who was a Morisonian. And yet one might say to you that you in expelling him would be putting a matter of belief on the same footing as direct observance of the Moral Law.

Of course the great thing is to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God. I am happy to say some of my best friends in the past have been Erastians and Voluntaries; my most intimate ones at present are Free Church folks. And indeed I sometimes wish I had been born a Free Kirkman or an Established Kirkman; it

would have saved a deal of bothersome thought; I might have been as happy as a king in some kirk in Galloway. I would often have come up to Awhirk to chaff you about your Covenanting principles.

I must say one often shudders to think of the high profession we make, and the poor practice even the best of us has. A Morisonian who pays his debts and an Erastian who loves his family are much nearer heaven than an Old Light Cameronian who offers 3s. 6d. in the pound and pulls his wife through the house by the hair of her head. Nay, according to Paul, an infidel would be better than he. But as I said before, much has been given us, and much is required.

You must be heartily tired of this tedious letter, but is it not a sign of friendship when you begin to tease a man and use liberties with him? I hope you won't take it as an insult that I have used ruled paper, and that not of the orthodox size. All the correspondents with whom I am on intimate terms know my hatred of notepaper. And now, lo and behold, if you care for my friendship, you have two proofs of it—a long letter and ruled essay paper, two proofs strong enough to convince a Jew. Heigh-ho! I am so vexed at not being able to settle down as a Gallovidian that you need not wonder if the next news you hear is that I have joined the Church of Rome, and entered a Ritualistic retreat—or, happy thought, become rabbit-trapper on Dinvin. You have no idea what a splendid man I am at muzzling ferrets.—Believe me, yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

33 SHAMROCK ST., GLASGOW,
July 31, 1878.

MY DEAR MR. WITHER,—I am greatly obliged to you for giving me so much information about the schoolroom audience; you couldn't have told me more exactly what I wanted to know.

I fear I shall not have the happiness to be your guest at

Awhirk. The M'Clews kindly asked me to come early next week to Dinvin, and I would have been delighted if it had been in my power to do so, but I don't expect to leave this till Friday, or much more probably, Saturday. And as I must leave early the week after, I shall have to postpone my visit to Awhirk till the evening of our days, when you and I, in our ninety-seventh year, shall see from your top windows the Jesuits leading in gay procession the last Seceder and the last Cameronian down to Port Patrick Harbour.

I suppose, however, after sermon in Stranraer I shall go straight to Awhirk and get a cup of tea. Won't that be the best way ? And if so, you will perhaps be so kind as wait for me near Mr. Easton's, and if I am out first I shall wait for you, and then we shall walk out together in unity. I don't know whether young Mr. M'Clew will accompany us or not. Probably he will have had enough of me by that time. But at any rate I shall *walk* out with you, seeing I am, yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. David Wilson

August 6, 1878.

MY DEAR DAD,—I must, as is most due, thank you with all the warmth of a warm heart for the photo. Hereafter you shall figure on my walls, more precious and beautiful than a Gobelin tapestry with the adventures of the Argonauts for its subject. The portrait does not flatter you, but it is a horseman undoubtedly, as W. says, and I shall have all the more scope for my descriptive and analytical turn of mind. I shall not always perhaps stick to truth, but I shall speak of you as an ideal character, and therefore the more ideal your daily life, the deeper your yearnings after the true, the higher your soul's aspirations, the less guilty shall I be of base falsehood and ridiculous assertion. Once more many thanks. . . .

I got a call to Whithorn last week, and must say 'yes' or 'no' next Tuesday—a very small congregation in one of the three oldest towns in Scotland.

Here is a story I heard yesterday.

When a member in —— was proposing another candidate he first of all stated several serious objections to me, and ended by saying, 'Among many reasons, I must put Mr. Struthers aside as a recalcitrant claimant.' Now, I think that good; and as I firmly believe nobody would vote for a character such as that unless he perfectly understood what it meant, I assert that the fact that two-thirds of a country congregation voted for me proves the existence of very great culture in the Cameronian Connection.

I shall be happy to hear from you, even although I am a Recalcitrant Claimant. J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Robert Allan

(The call to Whithorn Reformed Presbyterian Church having been accepted.)

GALLOWAY ARMS, WHITHORN,
Oct. 4, 1878.

MY DEAR BOB,—If it is any satisfaction to you to know it, I may tell you that the letter I have this moment received is the third that has reached me since I came here, and the first from any of my companions. The other two were respectively from a middle-aged minister and an old elder. I thought it would have been not unlike Corry to have been my first-foot. It was Gray's duty, if the answering of letters be a duty; it would have been Wilson's honour, had he known it. You, my dear Bob, have stepped in and seized the prize. It was my intention all along to have written to you next Monday, but your letter requires, as it deserves, an immediate reply. I am heartily sorry I cannot be in Glasgow on the 14th to avail myself of the honour of accepting a ticket from you for Gough's lecture. It was with great dismay I was told, a month ago, the date. I had looked forward with great anxiety to the chance of hearing him, and was much downcast when I saw the middle of October given as the time of his arrival. . . .

My ordination took place here last Tuesday, and I am thankful to say the day which I feared would be full of

sadness to me was full of happiness. It was my wish that there should be no soiree or meeting of any sort. I understood the members of Presbytery would dine together—that is, take dinner before going off by train, and it was thought that perhaps twenty people would sit down, but some of the townspeople kindly wished to be present, and though there was a large company, and though the papers called it an 'ordination-dinner-in-the-Galloway-Arms,' it was the simplest possible affair. There was not a drop of liquor put on the table. There were no toasts, and no sentiments, but just a little quiet chatting. The room we met in was so small, and the whole thing expected to be so quiet, that some who kindly insisted on being present had to place their plates on their knees. No, Bob, there was neither drink, nor mention of it, nor apology for its absence, and never shall be, I hope, wherever I have any say.

As you know, there is a pretty seven-roomed manse, commanding views of the English and Kirkcudbright coasts, but it is let, stable (note the word stable) and all, to a doctor, and he holds it till May. Whithorn is not the best place in the world in which to find lodgings, and I have been compelled to take a room in the Galloway Arms, an ordinary country hotel, but with a singularly good character. It is kept by a Miss Gordon and her married sister and her husband. I could not be more comfortable, and unless something very special turns up I shall be glad to stay here. . . .

My first Sabbath's regular work here will be on the 13th of October.[1] A singular coincidence to the mind of yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Home

Monday, Oct. 7, 1878.

. . . ALL went well. The weather looked very threatening, the little barometer having fallen very steadily all Saturday. There was a south-west wind blowing, and

[1] The second anniversary of the day J. P. S. left home to travel round the world.

about ten there was a regular downpour; but it cleared a little, and though the sky looked hazy the rain kept off all day, which was most singular, as every one thought we would have the worst possible weather.

There was an extremely good congregation in the morning. Mr. M'Donald prefaced on the 87th Psalm, and preached from Zechariah vi. 13: 'Even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory.' Very good. In the evening there were dark clouds flying about, but behind them one could see golden clouds and a blue sky. I hope it may be so through my life. The church was full; one or two more could have got seats, but it was, I may say, quite full. I took 1 John iv. 7, and, though I did not get on exactly as I would have liked, the people were very attentive. But no one said a word. I don't know what the collection was either time.

We sang Psalms xx., cxxii., and cxxxiii.

Next Sabbath is exactly two years since I left home to go round the world. I intend to preach from 'Ye have not passed this way heretofore,' Josh. iii. 4. I had a kind letter from Allan on Friday, and one from Gray on Saturday.

I shall do some visiting this week, beginning with the far-out people. One of them, a girl—Grace M'Keand—has eight shillings a week. Her people are not members, but she is. She called on Mr. Smith last week and asked if they were 'lifting stipend money yet.'

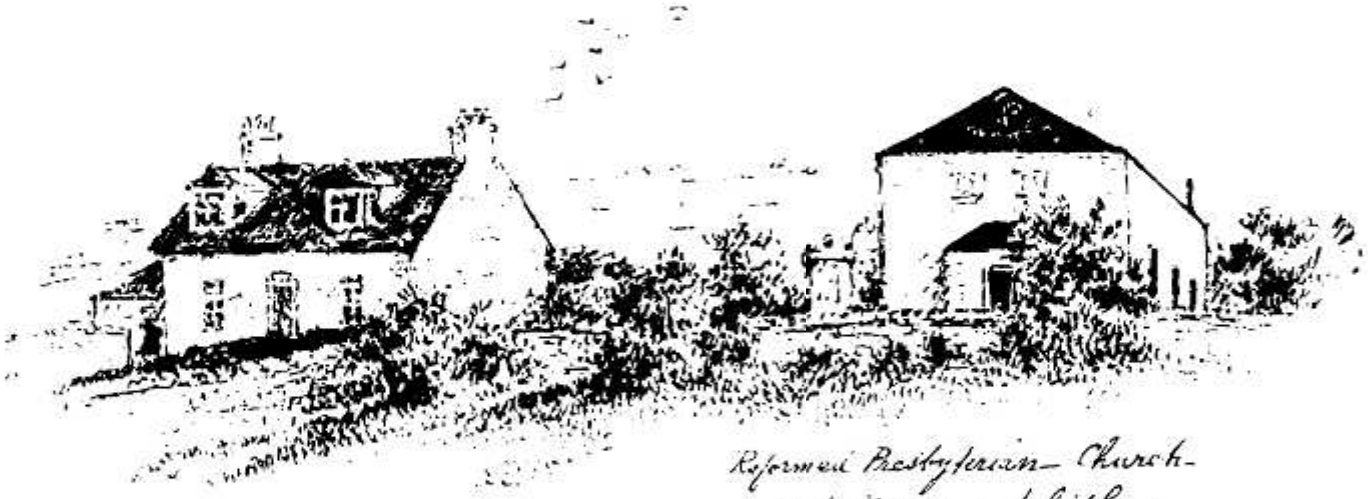
I put in all your contributions to the collection yesterday. I was in the session-house on Saturday evening. The Communion cups, plates, and tokens are all of the year 1827. I hope you are all well and in good spirits.

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. P. Wither, Awhirk, Stranraer

GALLOWAY ARMS, WHITHORN,
Oct. 22, 1878.

MY DEAR MR. WITHER,—When we parted at Mr. M'Clew's door on the 12th of August, your last words were, 'I 'll be down to see you sometimes.' I need scarcely say



Reformed Presbyterian Church
and Manse. Whithorn

how much it pleased me to hear you say so, and if at any time you can spare a few days, say from a Monday to a Friday, it would be a great gratification to me—as Mr. Easton would say—if you were to be my guest, and make yourself at home here, and use your utmost freedom both of speech and action. I think we could enjoy a few days together, and though I could scarcely call this a large manufacturing centre or an important junction, we would yet be as free as our minds and could mentally call London or Paris, and in fact the whole universe, our own; and provided we stuck to the truth there are no limits to which we might not go. As lodgings are not over plentiful in this neighbourhood I have had to take up my quarters at the Inn. I am very comfortable indeed, and could make you so too.

For company I have an occasional commercial traveller. They are a strange race, knowing as a rule only one subject, such as leather, or coals, or the insides of watches, or whisky; and even on these subjects their knowledge is limited to the prices of varying qualities. And although, by their wandering life and frequent dealings with men, they might be supposed to know something of human nature, their sole aim seems to be to find out and recollect ever after what weakness each embodiment of said human nature is most liable to. So to one man they rail at Voluntaryism in a superficial way, to another they narrate the most authentic gossip, to a third they offer 'a stiff one,' or, as they facetiously call it, 'a bottle of lemonade.' To me, after they have found out my line, they lament the low state of commercial morality, of which their previous revelations of their own business afford as a rule most ample illustration. Some of them are singularly decent fellows, and all have a push and go about them that make me feel very stupid.

I shall be happy to hear from you if you can find leisure. The letters I get are chiefly business—sometimes from publishers of congregational hymn-books—sometimes from insurance companies, whose whole aim seems to be to find

men who never spit blood, that they may bestow upon them in the most unselfish way large bonuses which happen to fall due next March, and will be shared in by me, or any other man, apparently from the deepest affection and regard for my own and my widow's personal exigencies. I have also had calls from two insurance agents, who after twelve hours' cajolery and flattery left me some of their literature and a good deal of their abuse. I hope Mr. and Mrs. Wither are in good health, also your sisters and brothers.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Robert Allan

GALLOWAY ARMS, WHITHORN,
Nov. 14, 1878.

MY DEAR BOB,—I am lying in bed as I write this, my tabernacle being twisted in an intricate compound manner which could be represented only by a Phidias or a Chantrey, or by a numerous series of photographs. My ninth day running in bed, too, by reason of a grievous rheumatism which seized on the bones of my feet and legs and my other - people's - burdens - bearing shoulders. And before these nine days began, I had other thirteen of affliction, ten of which saw me with a dire quinsy, of which ten, four found me unable to sleep or eat or play on instruments of music. So that now for twenty-two days I have had sorrow, by reason whereof I am now either much better or much worse—save the mark!—than I was when I last saw the light of your eyes and the large blue windows of your little black soul. I need not describe the rackings of my bones nor the lofty imaginings that never existed in my mind. I decline to renew my grief; therefore, O Bob, you shall never know the various stages of my maladies. I decline to give you any information, and so put it in your power to spread all over Glasgow the secrets of my prison-house. Neither shall I tell you the state of my pulse these three weeks, although I dare say you would like fine to know. . . .

To Mr. David Wilson

WHITHORN, *Feb.* 6, 1879.

MY DEAR DAD,—I duly received the work by Dr. Lawson which your father so kindly sent me. Please give him my hearty thanks. I confess you were entitled to an earlier acknowledgment. . . . With the severe weather there has been an unusual amount of trouble, and, besides that, I have been hard at work repairing our synagogue. My predecessor forbade the beadle, nicknamed the 'Hoolet,' to light the stove; wherefore by the space of three years the stove remained in its blackness, and the belief arose that it was irreparably out of order. But I, J. P. Struthers, refused to believe this, and early one morning made experiments—interrogated the stove, in fact, after the advice of Verulam, and having guessed that three years of rain and rust and rubbish and the works of birds could not have left its iron chimney in the best of order, first worked below with crooked instruments of iron, wood, and brass, and next having seized the head of an old kitchen broom and put string around the end, and climbing and descending alternate slopes upon my session-house roof, let down my broom like a sooty imp, and cleaned the pipe.

Once more the old fires blazed anew, once more the smoky rings did curl.

After this work was accomplished, there were parts of the walls turned green by the bursting of a 'rone' in some equinoctial rain. Then did I appear with whitening brush and cleansed the walls. And the worshippers had peace.

I intend, if I 'm spared, to whitewash the whole hypothec this summer, and therefore even now I am practising on the session-house, and had you seen its walls yesterday morning all black and cob-webbed thick, and again beheld them when the sun went down—

> Most beauteously painted, red
> Shoulder high, thence snowy white—

—I was interrupted there. Post goes in a little. Write me.—Adieu, old man. J. P. ST. RUTHERS.

To Mr. Robert Allan

April 25, 1879.

. . . F. G. is here at present. He is a very handsome fellow, indeed, and agreeable to boot. His opinion of me, obtained in London, was this: 'Struthers is very bitter and sarcastic.' You know, O Bob, whether that is true or not. I put it to you, Was there ever gentler lamb or more timid dove? Struthers bitter! As well call —— inaccurate or —— dour and obstinate and passionate. Heed not these babblers, *magna est veritas*, etc.

I am now the fortunate possessor of a cat. It is not what Calverley calls an 'ebon he,' 'tis a white and brownish she, a Muscovite with a distinguished ancestry. Three old ladies—Established Church—own its mother, and they kept, all unbeknown to me, its sweetest kit, 'thinking it would be a nice companion till I got a better.' I spend my leisure moments in thinking what I shall call it, and I shall be well pleased to have your advice. My cat, of course, will be no ordinary one. I hope it will be a model cat, gentle yet brave, playful yet sober on occasion, 'just as well as generous,' guided no less by judgment than by feeling; thus, being true to me as well as to itself, it cannot then be false to any man. I congratulate you on being on decently friendly and familiar terms with its master.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. Alex. Ritchie

(*Parish minister of Whithorn, on his wedding tour.*)

WHITHORN, *Oct.* 23, 1879.

MY DEAR RITCHIE,—Please give my kindest and most dutiful regards to Mrs. Ritchie.

When I last saw you—it was after the train moved off—you were sitting all alone and almost in darkness. Your darkness is now gone, I trust for ever, and you sit henceforth in a great light. I wish you both a long life and a happy.

Oct. 27.

I WAS more pleased than I can tell you to receive your very long and most kind and charming letter. There was a fine mingling of grave and gay, and whilst my eyes were one moment inclined to weep, the next moment the soul of me chuckled, and I rejoiced with a vehement joy. Mrs. Ritchie's kind words were specially grateful to me, and I meditated much on your great blessedness on winning one whose words even at second hand, and in a difficult handwriting, were so sweet and kindly. I have now got her photograph before me, and have read over certain parts of your letter in the light of her countenance, and am well pleased.

You were both very beautifully prayed for on Sabbath, that you might have many, many days together, and the people were greatly delighted at having their thoughts so happily expressed.

Oct 29.

I CALLED at the Manse to-day. The porch is tiled and the inner doors set up. Mrs. Harkiss was in great distress concerning two brace of partridges sent to you by Lord Galloway. They were a week old when they arrived, and that they might be the better preserved, Mrs. H., who had been in good houses, notably a Mr. R.'s—he was married, that 's the way she left—plucked them and steeped them in water, with the result that at dinner time she sent a brace to me because there was nobody Mr. Ritchie respected so much. The birds could in no wise be kept for your coming, unless one were to embalm them, and in that case they could not be eaten, I presume. What with your partridges, and a pheasant and hare I got from Mrs. Stewart, Glasserton, I am in rare feather this week, and am sore perplexed in my mind.

Nov. 4.

I AM not going to the concert, and shall therefore not be supposed to be practising self-denial in going to the Manse.[1]

[1] To receive the couple on their return home.

The eternal harmonies are better worth than the voices of three hundred Gallovidians. I am tremendously pleased at being asked to do the duty of a near kinsman.

The Cumberland coast has been wondrously clear these few days, and when I look at it of a morning I see, as it were, a vision of angels. Which I wish it were Thursday evening that I might see them face to face—till when aju! —Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Robert Allan

Nov. 1879.

. . . BE assured, O man, I would really like to visit you. I don't suppose I shall have any other chance this year of talking with those who lived with me my happiest days. I never received kinder invitations in my life than I have received from my friends these autumn months, and I feel as if I never deserved another.

I preached in the Parish Kirk here last Sabbath, on the kirking of the young minister with his wife. She is a nice lassie, and brought her husband, in addition to much grace, a high musical gift and one hundred and fifty wedding presents. My text was, 'This is the Gate of Heaven.' I have heard of a woman in town talking of it in a shop and saying, 'I can tell ye it was na the gate of Heaven to me!'— Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. David Wilson

WHITHORN, *Jan.* 27, 1880.

MY DEAR DAD,—You don't know how happy I was when I read your letter and found you were still my old friend. My heart has been going out to you very much of late, as the Methodists say, and you would have heard from me about New Year's time but for an unusual stress of engagements. . . .

The truth is, two sermons a week, a prayer-meeting, and a class try one a good deal. I have for some time been preparing a final burst of eloquence with which to announce

the total clearance of my mental stock. I have not yet quite elaborated it, but some Sabbath, after exposing to view a very thin, wafery idea, I shall suddenly stretch forth my two hands and cry out, 'That, my dear brethren, is my last IDEA.'

My life is pretty uneventful: all Saturdays and Sabbaths. I have great difficulty in finding texts, and would gladly welcome suggestions. Sometimes I get on comfortably, but that is when I get hold of a brand new grand idea. I try to keep my mind as fresh and unclerical as possible, in illustration of which attempt you will please to note the unprofessional air of my letters. I like my Bible class and my prayer-meeting. Just now at the latter I am going through Nehemiah, and am hugely delighted with his straightforwardness and his decisiveness. He must have been a splendid young fellow, giving up his chance of a satrapy (that 's good !) for the sake of the rubbish of the walls of Jerusalem and the still greater rubbish who dwelt inside them. I would advise you to read it carefully, especially the first six and the last chapters, looking at every clause and phrase—a perfect Moltke of a fellow, a man of few words and brave deeds. And he wouldn't take any salary ! But you will be thinking it is Sabbath day, albeit the most interesting one you have had for a time. I try to make my prayer-meeting as full of life and humour and common sense as possible—I took to it a Hebrew MS. one night, and a set of phylacteries another—any poor Christian will tell you what they are—and the people were much pleased. . . .

The great form of entertainment in this town is one beginning with high tea at five o'clock, then passing through cards, dancing, music and talk, till it culminates in supper at 10.30. There is a deal of human nature here, and I enjoy watching it.

At such a party I was told there was to be some dancing, and I must not object, 'because, you know, dancing was a religious ordinance among the Jews.' 'Well,' I said, 'of course I won't object, but isn't it rather rough on a fellow

when he comes out for an evening's fun to treat him to religious ordinances ? '

I have been at but one real dinner party for some time, but it would pain you were I to tell you of the Plantagenets, and the dowager countesses, and the admirals, baronets, and the empty-headed M.P.'s who were also guests. . . .

Remember me kindly to your father and mother. Do write to me soon. If it hadn't been for constantly thinking of you, I don't know what I should have done these long weeks.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Robert Allan

WHITHORN, *May* 6, 1880.

MY DEAR BOB,—I am feeling slightly ill-natured to-day—why, I don't know. It may be the north-east wind parching up all the savoys I replanted last week ; or it may be that my little Rufus, the cat, to whom some weeks ago, as a reward of merit, I had presented a little bell, came tinkling into church at the prayer-meeting last evening, and made me and some others, as I was reading a psalm, burst out laughing. At any rate, I rose slightly agee, but am now getting happier. . . .

To Mr. D. Wilson

WHITHORN, *Sept.* 1880.

. . . I MUST thank you most sincerely for so kindly and so strongly urging me to visit you, but I won't be able to visit anybody this year. I have had to leave home pretty often this summer—my last expedition being to Haddington to my uncle's funeral. I had no time to go out to Nunraw, having to press home for a picnic which I was giving, and could no longer be postponed. And I may say that I am not refusing groundlessly, for I have given the same answer to W. W. G. and R. S. A., and my old college chum, Bathgate, who at Rothesay purposed to entertain MacCunn and MacEwen and me. Next week I hope to give another picnic, this time to my Bible class, which means twelve

hours' hard work at the seashore on the day appointed, several days' anxiety beforehand, and a week's weary bones after. However, the young folks like them, and they may be remembered perhaps longer than my sermons. Which reminds me, O pleasure-seeker, that this is my prayer-meeting night, and I must talk about the good King Josiah. It comes up in regular course. I have got a fine text in the chapter for next Sabbath: 'And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun.' Wherein is most aptly hinted the emptiness of lying vanities.

Please write to me very soon and send the photographs. I long exceedingly. I only wish you could hear me sing

'On Richmond Hill there lives a lass
More bright than May day morn.'

'Tis my best song.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. R. S. Allan

WHITHORN, *Oct.* 4, 1880.

MY DEAR BOB,—Your long and interesting letter pleased me very much. I had been wondering what had come over you.

Last Thursday I gave my Bible class a picnic at a pretty spot on the shore six miles from here. We numbered about thirty-six or thirty-seven, and what with anxiety as to the weather and the constantly ascending odour, for one whole day, of dumplings and roasts and sweet breads—my housekeeper made them all—I was in a state of collapse on Saturday, and have not yet fully recovered. We were tremendously lucky in the weather, and, indeed, every way. Nevertheless such days put one out sadly for Sabbath, and I am even more ashamed than usual to-day. For the future I think we shall follow the Apostles, and distribute loaves and fishes as soon after public worship as possible, and not immediately before it. I am sadly off for ideas. The ocean of truth has been drained off—nary a shell even to be got, my predecessors, such as

Newton and others, having unkindly left no provision for me. Can you direct me to any inland sea, or lake, or mere or tarn? One bonnie shell a week would do. . . .

I have got two new posts. I give a Bible lesson and Catechism ditto in the public school every day, in the morning, and a singing lesson thrice a week. I am just hurrying away to teach the children 'Gaily the Troubadour.' Whoso wisheth to see modesty, let him turn his eyes hither. The master can't sing, and our Erastian Government demands eight songs—else grant is withheld. And so I am 'An Orpheus, an Orpheus.' Lamplighters tarry at my approach, and the sun lingereth to do down. . . .

To the same

WHITHORN, *Dec.* 17, 1880.

MY DEAR BOB,—I intend in this letter to follow the example of the Apostle Paul and boast somewhat.

I have been for more than a fortnight taking the head-master's place in the principal public school—he, poor fellow, being badly ill with bronchitis.

I have to be there from 10 to 3.45. With half an hour of interval, in which time I have to go home, gobble my dinner, read my newspaper about Ireland, as also any letters my friends may kindly send me, and then hurry back. I, of course, do not use the tawse. I do a little in the ridicule line; *e.g.* to-day I made an idle fellow, who is always 'forgetting' to do his sums or parsing, come out to the middle of the floor and mention the lessons for to-morrow, and then I solemnly tied a knot on his handkerchief. The poor fellow burst out crying, and I felt myself a hard-hearted wretch. We had twenty minutes singing to-day, greatly to the joy of the children. I announced that we should have another twenty minutes to-morrow if they behaved well, and then they would get a holiday the day after. The little creatures cheered and clapped their hands, and only remembered as they were going out at the door that the day after 'the morn' was Saturday. . . .

The Glasgow vacancy was filled last week. Three names were proposed, and to my surprise I was second. I believe I am not considered doctrinal or argumentative enough, and, indeed, I can believe it. I love to make strong assertions, and once I have discovered anything, it always seems to me self-evident. I then point out its beauty and its wondrousness, but I never think of proving it.

You very kindly invite me to visit you at the New Year. If I have any time to spend out of Whithorn I must go to Nunraw, as I promised to do so a long time ago.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

. . . And now, Bob, once-a-days I did not think you would have started for London on a Sat. evening. Whether you think it or not, 'twas wrong. Three thousand years ago I should have been under the painful necessity of throwing the first stone at you outside the camp. But I suppose that is one of the things that a man sensibly, or insensibly, grows into—one of the things that make one notice that years have gone by. All the same I was and am sorry.

To the same

PATMOS, *Feb.* 21, 1881.

JOHN an Apostle to the well-beloved Guy.

MY DEAR BOB,—I do not know that I have anything to say, but I like to get letters from you, therefore I must send one.

The weather to-day is bitterly cold—a genuine easter blowing in through all the crevices of my roof tree.—'Roof tree' is good, although maybe, like Palmerston's definition of dirt, matter in the wrong place.

The Galloway hills have little patches of snow on them, and the effect of the sun shining on them is very striking. I warrant you there isn't a soul looking at them but myself. For the moment they are mine. Their spirit suffuses me—cold, hard, indistinct. Humility was ever my strong point, you see.

Here is a variation I heard a little girl give yesterday at a class I have on Sabbath afternoons :—

'Yea, tho' I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For Thou art with me *on the road*,' etc.

Here is a thought. I was talking on the effect of having a companion who knows ill of one—a subject I have had experience of—and the golden-mouthed orator used this illustration. The man whose the character is has, so to speak, the MS. of the character. But the moment he has a friend or acquaintance his MS. is put into print. That person receives or forms an *impression*. The person may change his character—turn a decent fellow, destroy the plates, and break up the types—his book may go out of print, but it remains in circulation. It takes a long time for a new edition to supersede the old one. A person may get the first, and keep it, and never get the other.

Perhaps I could have occupied three-quarters of a page to better purpose by quoting from George Eliot to this effect :

'"The theatre of all my actions is fallen," said an antique personage, when his chief friend was dead; and they are fortunate who get a theatre where the audience demands their best.'

Or this from Browning :—

'One wise man's verdict outweighs all the fools'.

. . . . . .

Like Verdi when, at his worst opera's end,

. . . . . .

He looks through all the roaring and the wreaths
Where sits Rossini patient in his stall.'

I hope this week to add a cherry tree, and moreover a plum, to my garden. I shall train them up the front of my house. And there shall be roses and jessamine on the gable-ends. Eden outside and within the . . . alias—

Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

WRITE! WRITE!!

To the same

May 18, 1881.

. . . It may interest you to know that a little child here has dubbed me Mr. Bothers.[1] I was lying in bed the other night about the third watch, thinking of our old games at Rankeilour, spelling, charades, etc., and I tried how many words could be got out of all our names. Struthers beats Allan and Gray any day. That is to say, there 's more in me than in you ; for one thing, there is t-r-u-t-h. I don't think my ' character ' said truth : ' just as well as generous,' were the words, but truth and justice are akin.

I have been living for two days on crow pie, kindly presented to my housekeeper by a friend. I think it has a curious influence on the brain. I feel as if I were on the top of a tree, swaying about in the wind and puzzled by the strange existences below me. It 's a queer sensation, I tell you. . . .

To the same

. . . My housekeeper has been on holiday since Friday, and I have been keeping house myself, and in fact doing so nobly that I feel competent to be a wife unto myself. No need for a helpmeet for this son of Adam. I expect Mrs. Stewart home this afternoon, but meantime I have prepared dinner. In a little I shall lay down my pen, and having assumed my old boots by reason of the great rain, shall wield the graip, and having lifted some potatoes for the poor, shall dibble me in a few green kail for the winter of my discontent. If you but saw me in my old light jacket, digging away and prophesying how many potatoes each time shall turn up, you would doubtless say, ' There 's queer folk in the Shaws.' . . .

[1] The name was always a difficulty. One lady went so far astray as to address J. P. S. as ' Mr. Scratchers,' and an Irishman called him ' Mr. Trowsers.'

To the same

1881.

. . . I AM glad you are reading the Revised Version. I like it very much indeed—read nothing else just now. Of course, it 's not perfect, but neither of us is, and I 'm afraid you, at least, are much less so. Of all the copies I gave away—I put them in seats in church on Sabbath morning, and talked on Rev. xxii. 18-19, to justify the procedure—not a soul has made a remark, except my mother, to whom I gave one in Glasgow. She likes it, and affirms it reads 'far bonnier.' Most of the people, I am afraid, don't see any difference, or worse still, see differences that are no differences.

Potatoes doing well. My bean field, two yards square, is most fragrant. Turnips disappeared. Lettuce and radish, ditto, only from a different reason. Cabbages middling.

As for Robertson Smith—'tis a wide subject. If I had been in Assembly would have proposed an amendment deposing him, but paying no salary. Call him heretic if you will, but don't insult him. Do you think if you gave me £2000 or £20,000 for nothing, I would take it. Certainly not. I would at least write you a letter every four days. J. P. S.

To Mr. Simpson

(Clerk of Session of Greenock congregation, after receiving a call from it.)

WHITHORN, *Friday, Nov.* 18, 1881.

MY DEAR MR. SIMPSON,—It pains me more than I can tell to have to say that there is no hope of my being able to come to Greenock as your minister. When I asked the deputation to postpone their visit I was waiting the answer to inquiries I had been making in the only direction that could, so far as I know, possibly open up the way to my leaving my present people. The answer came this week, and I must just ask the deputation to put off their visit

altogether. I had intended to meet them at Newton-Stewart—an arrangement which would have allowed them to get home the same day—but of course this will be unnecessary now. I hope to write a letter to the congregation next week which I would like read from the pulpit the Sabbath after. In it I shall give the reasons that weighed with me, but meantime I would only remind you that our necessity is greater than yours. Whithorn congregation has given eight calls in forty-three years, and at present, owing to some of our best members—farmers—leaving for England, the burden, if I were to leave, would fall entirely on the shoulders of two or three who have already suffered more than most men for their principles. You have a splendid session in Greenock—there are but two or three of us here fighting the battle all alone, and I feel I cannot ask others to make greater sacrifices than I am prepared to make myself.

I love Greenock, and would choose it of all places I know.

And remember, dear Mr. Simpson, that if it is hard for you to be kept in anxiety and worry for months, remember that as far as man can see I am burying all the hopes a young man has for himself, and for his parents, and it is very hard for flesh and blood to bear.

As I have said, I will write next week if all is well, and meantime God bless you all.—Yours faithfully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Robert Allan

Nov. 30, 1881.

MY DEAR BOB,—I made up my mind twice about not going to Greenock, and thought, like Agag, the bitterness of death was past, when, in answer to a telegram, I had to go to Newton-Stewart yesterday to meet a deputation. I have had a good many thoughts since—chiefly because I had to put in words the state of matters in Whithorn, and my mind is now inclined the other way. I wish I never had had the call, and am in great misery. Howbeit I must say 'Yes' or 'No' finally, very soon—in fact I must know

before Sabbath. I enjoyed *The Monks* A1. Henry James's stories I like, and I don't like. Of course the last sentence in them is always the most important one, but it is too invariably sad. I shall perhaps feel inclined to discuss novels in a day or two. But I am out of sorts this afternoon, and besides 'tis prayer-meeting night—book of Joshua—and I have those brave daughters of Zelophehad's to talk of—plucky girls, to insist on their inheritance when still in the Wilderness and as yet had only the promise; and the men of light and leading in the Israelitish camp were for going back to Egypt. No wonder the Bible gives us their names and their story so often.

I send you a proof sheet of a short paper [on the promises in the Bible, as below] I wrote out last Monday in fulfilment of a promise which I thought had been forgotten. 'Tis inconsecutive, but if you can bring to it a mind replete, etc., well furnished, you will be able to fill up the gaps in the logic or the thought. It was a subject that interested myself. If you find it interesting, I shall be pleased. Praise would please me. Ridicule, as being what I expect, shall not dishearten me. Say honestly to my face what you would say in the narrow chamber of your soul.

The power of writing for the press is one that requires to be cultivated.—Adieu. J. P. S.

HOW MANY PROMISES ARE THERE IN THE BIBLE?

2 Peter i. 4.—'Exceeding great and precious promises.'

A good many months ago I came across a little paragraph in an old newspaper in which it was said there were 38,000 promises in the Bible. I had never heard of any one trying to count them before, and I thought it would be a good exercise for the Bible class to try to find out if the statement were true. Some accordingly took up one book, and some another, just as they felt inclined. We did not expect, of course, to be perfectly accurate in our work, but we hoped in time by doing our best to come at least pretty near the mark.

But we had not gone very far when we found ourselves

beset with difficulties. In the same book, for instance, one lad found 23; another, 35; while a girl claimed to have discovered 90. And when, in happy emulation, they went over the book a second time, the numbers rose to 98, 101, and 183. It almost looked as if there was a mistake somewhere.

I thought I had better go over the book myself. But I had not long begun when I was forced to put this question—'What is a promise?' How was I to know one when I saw it? There were passages in the Bible, of course, about which one could have no doubt whatever. 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' And so on. That is to say, there are what Mr. Power has beautifully called 'The *I wills*' of Scripture. And if one were to confine oneself to such forms of words as these, one's list might be correct enough, and yet, though an unspeakably glorious, it would not be such a wonderfully big one. But it is plain that we may have a promise—an exceeding great and precious promise—though we have neither the words 'I will' nor 'Thou shalt.'

1. A *word* may be a promise. If a man, for instance, calls himself a mason or a carpenter, we take it for granted that he is willing to do the work of a mason or a carpenter. So with all trades, especially with those that are called professions. For in these latter, men have no outward signs of their calling; and yet, when a man calls himself a doctor, or a lawyer, or a minister, the world, for a time at least, takes him at his word, and believes he can do things, simply because he says it.

Even so with the names of God. They all have a meaning, and that meaning has reference solely to His people's needs. When He calls Himself The Almighty, does He not proclaim Himself able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think? Does He not bind Himself to do anything

and everything for us? When he calls Himself our Friend, He must show Himself friendly—He must do the kinsman's part. Every time He uses the name of Jesus He pledges Himself to save His people from their sins. And in like manner we might go through all the titles and attributes of God, and we should find them to be but promises summed up.

2. *Facts* are promises. Peter, in the first verse of this epistle, styles himself a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. We turn back to the Gospels, and read that, concerning that same Lord, he said, 'I know not the man.' We put the verses together, and say, Surely God forgiveth iniquity, and transgression, and sin. And the fact becomes a promise.

It is not always thus with men. If we ask them to do to us as they have done to others, or to ourselves, in time past, they tell us the circumstances are different, or, they have changed their minds. But with the Father of Lights there can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

'The Lord of us hath mindful been,
And He will bless us still.'

Or, if I have not my own past to fall back upon, can I say there is any sinner He has remembered in his low estate—any one He has forgiven? Then, He will not pass by me. One proof of His love will do; He has shown Himself through the lattice. This God will be my God if I will have Him, for He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. If I but take Christ as mine, then all things are mine—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, all the experiences of their life, and all the facts of universal history, the world, life, death, things present, things to come—for Christ continueth ever.

3. A *look* may be a promise. No one would thrust himself on the notice of the dying or the sorrowing if he did not mean to help them. And may we not regard every expression, every word in the Bible, no matter what it is, as a command from God to look on Him? And may we not safely give heed, expecting to receive something? We may not see the promise, but it is because we do not know how

to look for it. We receive not, because we ask not. We come to God's Word with preconceived ideas, not with the fresh eye of childlike faith. We love to go in ruts; we forget that there are green pastures. No one, for instance, can spend even a little time in the churchyards of our country and fail to be struck with the want of freshness, of individuality, in the choice of the passages of Scripture that are engraven on the tombs. A few mourners, here and there, who have been happy in their friendships, and have comprehended the high solemnity of their task, have recorded the phrase or verse their friend loved most, or, better still perhaps, they have given him an opportunity of speaking to the world even from the grave, by writing on the stone the special lesson of his life—that view of the love of God that each year served only to make clearer. But, to pass by those who adorn their sepulchres with holy words simply because it looks pretty and sounds pious, are there not many, even of God's people, who, instead of searching the Scriptures for themselves, or falling back on some word that has been tried, are content to borrow their comfort from some adjoining monument? And if, on the other hand, one wanders amongst the graves of the native Christians of India, or some other land where religious life is earnest, one sees, in the strange texts that are employed, that the men who chose them believed, not for the saying of another, but because they had seen God themselves. And one discovers, with shame, how often in His Word the Most High has been looking towards us while our eyes were holden or turned away.

Truly, if we would but seek the Lord—if haply we might feel after Him, and find Him—we should see He is never far from every one of us. His very threatenings would prove to be the reverse sides of promises. Every word, every jot, every tittle, would seem to show us God had given us a claim on Himself. So long as Wisdom uttereth her voice in the streets, though she call us simple ones and scorners, it is to make us turn at her reproof. The great gulf is not yet fixed; we still have access to the throne of

grace. Just as soldiers who are shut up in some fort know they are not forgotten so long as they see signals flashing in the distance, even though they cannot tell what the flashes mean; just as even the intermittent and unintelligible quiverings of an electric needle prove that communications are not wholly interrupted; so one word from God assures us we are not yet cast off. Earth and Heaven can still communicate.

Such were a few of the things we were forced to think of when we tried to count the promises of God. It was, and is, a hopeless and a foolish task. For, to succeed in it, one would need to know all the necessities of men, all the ignorance of angels (for they, too, we are told, desire to look into these things); nay, more, one would need to be able to find out the Almighty to perfection, and comprehend what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Thirty-eight thousand promises in the Bible! As well say there are 38,000 years in Eternity.

'O Lord my God, full many are
The wonders Thou hast done;
Thy gracious thoughts to us-ward far
Above all thoughts are gone.
In order none can reckon them
To thee: if them declare
And speak of them I would, they more
Than can be numbered are.'

To Mr. Simpson, Greenock

WHITHORN, *Dec.* 2, 1881.

MY DEAR MR. SIMPSON,—I was just writing to you when your kind letter reached me, and I am greatly pleased. It may help to put the matter in a clearer light if I state briefly the reasons that made your suggestion about my visiting Whithorn occasionally weigh so much with me. As I mentioned before, there are several things I am interested in here that I would hardly like to cut connection with. As for instance:—First of all, my Bible class; I should

not like to see it permanently broken up, and I think I could prevent that, at least in some measure, by giving them exercises and seeing them face to face now and again.

Then there is a coffee-house, supported chiefly by a landed proprietor in our neighbourhood, and as I am the only minister who has taken any share in the management of it and am, in one sense, the manager of it myself, it would pain me to bid farewell to it. Whereas by coming periodically to see it I could meet the members, and even add to their pleasure by providing new relays of books for the library. And it would be all the more needful that I should stick by it seeing I have used my best endeavours to keep the proprietor I have spoken of from abandoning his enterprise.

And further, I have got to know intimately all the children in the chief public school by giving them Bible and sometimes singing lessons. I would like to do my best for them by keeping in touch with them, and a few days with them every little while would accomplish that. I do not think it would do Greenock any harm that I should have a wider experience than I would otherwise have were I to break off the past altogether, and have no print of my three years' labour here except a memory.

. . . No mention would need to be made in the meantime concerning the month's holiday. The matter of expense would, of course, be left for me to settle, and the question would simply be—that I should be allowed to go to Whithorn once every six or eight weeks so long as should be found needful or advisable.

This letter virtually amounts to an acceptance of the call. I have thought and talked over the matter since Tuesday, and that is my conclusion.

If your people accepted this plan, I would announce the matter formally to the Clerk and Moderator, and if no obstacle arose the induction might take place, if convenient for you, about the end of January.

I was sorry to vex you all at the Presbytery, but when I left, some of my people were at the train, and there were

touching letters received by me at the last moment. The arrangement so kindly proposed would leave the tie as little broken as possible, and make the future much more cheerful.

I shall be happy to hear as soon as possible the issue of your meeting.—Believe me, yours faithfully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Robert Allan

WHITHORN, *Friday, Dec.* 9, 1881.

MY DEAR BOB,—The Phœnician mariner, revisiting his flat-domed dwelling-place, from the latticed windows thereof could see upon the myriad-sanded shore the stocks once occupied, but now deserted, by some Argosy whose keel, ribs, masts of the wood of Lebanon, had there been fitted each to each, respecting ever the shakings, tremblings, buffetings from shrieking Euroclydon and billow cruel, to be administered thereafter; so, honoured sir, shall pilgrim chronicler in coming age record the emotions of his soul, temple of love, throbbing beneath his emerald belt, as with tear-dimmed eye he beheld the place of Whithorn where fulfilled his first ministry, honoured sir, thy servant's dust. That is to say, it has been settled to-day that I go to Greenock, probably end of January. The Greenock folk have kindly agreed to let me visit this place, if I wish, for the sake of the school and the coffee-house, etc., every six or eight weeks.

CHAPTER VI

BEGINNING OF MINISTRY IN GREENOCK

1882–1887

'The first love of a minister for his own flock is as original and peculiar a blossom of the heart as any other that could be named.'—REV. PROFESSOR STALKER, D.D.

To Mr. Robert Allan

26 BRISBANE ST., GREENOCK,
Jan. 1882.

MY DEAR BOB,—You are a good fellow! Your letter was the first I received in Greenock. The studs are beautiful, and I thank you with all my heart. Hints as to dress partly attended to already.

I took a house to-day on the Esplanade. There are three tenants in it, and I have half of the upper flat and attics. It commands a magnificent view, and might tempt any girl to be my wife. There are steps opposite it, so that your yacht's boat will have no difficulty in fetching me off. I must have a flagstaff put up for signalling when I want it to come. The rent is £40 a year, and £5 for the time up till May. But rents are high in Greenock, and all the empty houses were being let, so that I had no choice but either to take this one or stay in lodgings. If ever I can't pay the rent, I shall sell the studs or telegraph to 'Amicus.' [1]

My last week at Whithorn was a very solemn one. We had Communion together, and a meeting every day from Wednesday to Tuesday inclusive—except Friday. On the last day—Tuesday—I went in the morning to the school.

[1] Mr. Allan's telegraphic address.

The children in the second highest classes repeated Agur's prayer, and the verse

'One thing I of the Lord desired.'

Then they said, 'How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?' After which we read the last chapter of Proverbs, which happened to come in regular course. And then we prayed, and cried, and shook hands. In the afternoon I gave the whole school their singing lesson. The Inspector comes in six weeks, so we went over six tunes—'The minstrel boy,' 'My heart is sair,' 'Oh, gin I were a baron's heir,' 'Ca' the ewes to the knowes,' 'Gaily the troubadour,' and 'Home, sweet home.' They sang very sweetly and quietly, but we could scarcely finish the last, and then there was an awful stillness and solemnity. I said two or three words, and pronounced the Benediction. After the last song I laid my tuning-fork on the mantelpiece, surrendering, as it were, my rod of office. I shook hands with the teachers, and so good-bye. Their silence was sublime. I shall tell you more hereafter. You must not take it ill me telling you all this. You shall stay with me occasionally in Greenock on misty nights.[1] There will always be light at 23 Esplanade.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

I had an envelope addressed to your office, but I want to feel I am near you, and send this to your house. You 'll get it to-night.

To the same

26 BRISBANE ST., GREENOCK,
Jan. 1882.

MY DEAR BOB,—Many thanks for the tickets, though I fear I shall not be able to use them. We have our prayer-meeting here as at Whithorn on Wednesday evening, and two Bible classes on Friday evening, and I must visit every night besides, to make the acquaintance of my people.

[1] Mr. Allan's home in summer was across the Firth.

It was very good of you proposing to be at the induction. I refused to have any present, and they insist on paying the carriage of my furniture. I get into my new house in fifteen days or so. I am to choose 'the papers' to-morrow. How I wish I had some one with taste to guide me. Should I go in for neutral tints, or peacocks, or conventional roses, or what? Have you any ideas? Twelve o'clock to-morrow is the hour, ideas or no ideas. The house was occupied by a theatrical manager, and is very dirty. Painters scraping away. The view to-day was glorious: specially the washing of the sailors hung out on the Russian battleship *Peter the Great*. . . .

To the same

GREENOCK, *June* 16, 1882.

MY DEAR BOB,—I left for Ireland on Monday evening, and returned on Thursday morning. . . . One of my little Bible class died yesterday at 4 A.M. She was only ten years old. . . . I never came across a sweeter creature. Owing to her great weakness she was not able to leave the house for two months or so, and could not even sign her name unless with pain. A fortnight ago, however, she wanted to do the weekly exercise. It was a list of twenty godly women in the Bible. I have it now before me, and I think her own name comes in not inappropriately at the foot—Mary Elizabeth Paterson. I saw her on Monday afternoon, and said I would see her again when I came back on Thursday morning. It pleases me to think that at twelve on Wednesday night she asked whereabouts Mr. Struthers would be now in the boat. A little after, I am told, when her mother was sitting silent in the room, the little creature suddenly sang these two lines of the 145th Psalm:—

'Much to be praised and great God is,
His greatness none can comprehend.'

I thought as I looked at her pale sweet face last night, the words she had uttered she now knew were more true than any human heart could ever conceive.

To the same

52 Eldon St., Greenock,
August 8, 1882.

. . . You ask my opinion about filling a yacht with couples matrimonially inclined, and ask if I would like any one to play the part of Providence to me. 'Tis a charming question, and admits of every possible kind of answer from Yea, yea, to Nay, nay. It might be an utterly diabolical contrivance, or it might be the very highest exercise of the very highest powers. It is so very hard in these matters to be unselfish. Suppose I had a fool of a sister, or daughter, it would be very natural for me to try to get her for life in tow of the very best and wisest and richest young fellow I know. But we are bidden love our neighbour's son as our own daughter, and do as we would be done by. Wherefore, suppose I had a sister called Sarah, and a very intimate companion called Peter —Peter being all that was worthy—I ought to reason thus: Sarah is the biggest ass I know, as conceited as she is ugly, wasteful, ignorant, lazy, and my mother is trying to get Peter involved. Resolved to introduce Peter to Katie, whom I love myself, but is far too good for me. Resolved further to pray night and day that Sarah may get more sense, but till this takes place, entreat that her folly may die with her.

In general these are my sentiments. The world is to be regenerated by men and women, and the best men and women are usually the descendants of upright, modest, and rightly ambitious people. Resolved therefore that if I do know of any good young man and any good young woman who seem to comprehend the high destiny to which God calls them and all men and women, I, John P. Struthers, will count it my highest glory and duty to introduce these truly modest and rightly ambitious young people to each other, and will strive to increase their mutual esteeem till it end in honourable love. . . .

To the same

52 ELDON ST., *Nov.* 3, 1882.

. . . THIS brings me to your question—commonplace orthodoxy or rationalistic beauty, intellect or amiability—which would I have? I hope I won't be tempted in that way. Orthodoxy is a cold east wind sort of word. A thoroughly upright, godly girl could not be commonplace unless she were a fool, and she would not even be commonplace then. This business is getting tangled. An amiable beautiful rationalist! Ah me! an orthodox dowdy!

'A signs-of-the-times young girl.
A nothing-but-leaves young girl.'

(Must write a song on this. *Pinafore* style.)

W. W. G. affirms that a godly young fellow would turn round a thoughtless girl, couldn't be otherwise, etc., etc. — love so powerful—man's mind so much stronger, save the mark! Personally I should like an amiable, orthodox, beautiful girl. Intellect, I fear, wouldn't have me. She would write pamphlets against my views and make me a turncoat. Fact is, I shall have to be a bachelor. But go you in for intellect and beauty and amiability, and you 'll not find them away from the highest orthodoxy. Am getting confused. Truth is—this sea-bathing at 6.30 A.M. by moonlight is bad for a fellow's head. My mind's wheels make so many revolutions every day that the crust of the brain has not had time to cool by the morning, and when I plunge into the cold water, cracks and fissures are the result. . . . Do write soon, and get one or two more letters from me before my brain goes.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

[1882.]

MY DEAR BOB,—I suffered fifteen minutes' anguish last week when a friend showed me a newspaper extract, and asked if I had really said such stuff. You have given me other fifteen this morning.

I never said one word about Newman's last verse, or about standing at prayer being a help to union. What I did say was *in this line.*

1. That the multiplication of hymn-books was a hindrance to unity. And I may say to you, Bob, if you had been as Catholic in your church-going as I have been you would understand the pain of being asked to sing a hymn you had no copy of, and no associations with. The singing is the happiest part of worship, and yet the part a stranger in any place of worship can least join in.

2. I said some of the Psalms seemed unfitted for our use, but as they were as much prayers as songs, if we couldn't sing them with reference to our own personal wants, we could offer them as prayers for brethren unknown to us whose perils and trials might be the same as David's, the Church of Christ fortunately not being confined to well-to-do Scotland.

3. Newman's hymn. I knew nothing finer, and yet to Protestants, rightly or wrongly, there must come this difficulty—Is his present position an answer to his prayer in that hymn? One advantage in the Psalms was this—they were prayers that had been answered—songs justified by the result.

I hope this explanation will show you I am not such a fool as you took me to be.

My people left Glasgow yesterday—the street I was born in—and now begins another stage in life's journey.

I think I would have been happy this week but for your letter. Now I feel bitter. I shall get out my spleen on Haman at the prayer-meeting to-night.—Yours,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. James Denney

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK, 1883.

MY DEAR DENNEY,— . . . You can't tell how strange I feel when you speak of entering on your work. It 's seven years since I preached my first sermon, a fortnight after I was licensed. My text was, 'God is love.' I wish you

tenfold more joy than I have had, though I think, too, if you had no more even than has fallen to my share, you would have had joy enough. And yet I never knew one whose ministry seemed so hopelessly destitute of what men call results. And I hope you will need less discipline than I have got. I thought I knew what life was before, but I have had a new lesson every year, and the newer the sharper. A minister is bound to enter into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, seeing he has to do Christ's work. I know you will forgive me talking in this patriarchal style, but I feel wae and concerned for you. Not that I think you will specially need to be tried, but it will come, and the better you behave under it, the sooner it will go.—Yours ever,

J. P. S.

To the Rev. A. D. Grant, Greenock

MESECH (*but the U.P.'s aforetime called it* PATMOS), 22.11.84.

MY DEAR GRANT,—I, John, was in the town called * * * for—— Ay, there 's the rub—What doest thou here, Elijah? Weather broken, chimney smoking, window open, and most bitterly cold. Comfortable room otherwise, obsequious landlady, married when she was thirty-five—far too late to marry—knows me a great deal thinner than when she saw me four years ago. I fear I have taken her measure a great deal better than she took mine. Oval table, on which I write. Two huge high-backed projecting-eared arm-chairs, sofa to right, two windows, dingy curtains, old-fashioned piano against one wall, chest of drawers with desk, tartan-patterned work-box, but, I am happy to say, no alabaster ornaments. Two landscapes and one sea scene, oil colours, on the walls. Engraving of African Ambassador getting a Bible from the Queen with legend—'Tell the Prince this is the secret of England's greatness.' Another engraving—the genius of poetry finding Robert Burns at the plough, highly allegorical, said genius looking like a tablemaid who has gone an errand to the wash-house and is looming through the steam. I am thinking of

telling my landlady—'This is the secret of Scotland's Decline and Fall.'

I had very little adventure on the way. At Coatbridge a woman came into the carriage, fat, fair and forty, and got four packages handed in, which I thought contained corn for hens. 'Hen's food?' I said. 'No, sparrables, and a 'm gaun to Dundee to try and get them sell't.' Her man was a nailer, and had six men working to him, but things were very dull; they were only making fifteen shillings a week, lang 'oors owing to the competition with the machine-made ones. But presently she would tell me no more. She had mair than yince fallen in wi' English travellers that braggit they had £850 a year and got a' oot o' her they could, and then tried to dae her, being in the same line. I told her I was no traveller, and I might have told her with all truth that I was a young man presently engaged with a son of Mr. Allan, the great shipowner, in a controversy about the translation of Enoch. She had four children; her eldest boy, though he was her son, was a very clever lad, gaun in twelve, in the fourth standard, but he would have been in the fifth only they flitted afore the examination to Coatbrig. Her fare to Dundee was 8s. 7d. She had had a gey sair life. Her man's mind was affecked sometimes. But she had rich friens and didna need to gang and sell sparrables unless she liket. She had an aunt that had £1400, an old maid, that wanted her to put her man in the Asylum, and gang and leeve wi' her, but she wadna dae that. And she had a brither in Coatbrig gey weel aff, but he had never ca'ed on her, and wis keepin' in wi' the aunty for sake o' the siller, but maybe he wud get cheated yet. The aunty had ca'ed on her, and wanted her to ca', but she liket to be independent. She had one hundred and eighty pounds weight of sparrables. She had mair than that three weeks ago, and got them a' sell't in Dundee, but her faither said if she made her fare aff them this time, they wud be quite pleased; they didna want to pay aff the men. She got the post office man to tak them on his barra to the Dundee

train, and gie'd him tuppence tae himsel! It was terrible tae see the men jumpin' aff thae trucks. Mony a time she spoke to them, but they said they had only to dee yince. She was the bravest woman I have seen for a while. . . .

Visitors for two hours. One of them has a boy seven last September, who can say off up to the end of Ps. xxxii. He could say all the Catechism before he was six. But he has a terrible work with his brother, aged five last May. He has stuck at the second verse of the sixth Psalm, and has only got to twenty-one in the Shorter Catechism. You will be pleased to hear that the seven-year-old boy, when he plays, you would think the most foolish of all the boys. I wish him an honourable career. Call no man happy till he is dead.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Lindsay Galloway[1]

(*Enclosing a programme of a lecture which Mr. Galloway had agreed to give, in Greenock, on Colliery Explosions.*)

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Jan. 13, 1885.

MY DEAR GALLOWAY,—Enclosed you see the great honour I have been the means of conferring on you, or rather the unmitigated nuisance I have made myself. How are you getting on? Any rare anecdotes? Or is it to be a sort of literary choke-damp? Come up here on the Thursday and read over your lecture, and I 'll give you lessons in gesture, voice modulation, the art of bowing, the secret of how to speak in a happy tone when half of the people have walked out and the other half are sound asleep. At any rate, come on the Thursday, and I 'll take you to a nice home, the heads of which you may judge of by the following anecdote. —— ——, good-natured honest soul, has a pretty house and a loving wife.

Before she was married she got a letter from him—a very important one, such as you perhaps have written more than once! She turned up her text-book to see what the verse for the day was. And it was:—'The Lord that

[1] Now of Kilchrist, Campbeltown, an old college friend.

delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine!' They both enjoy that story, and so does every one who knows them. So come.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Robert Allan

Sept. 1885.

. . . EVEN when one carries the maul in the scrimmage with evil spirits, and knocks them over, yet when they are on the ground they grip one's legs, and one gets exhausted—(distinct symptoms of mental hallucination. Did I tell you of the little boy in the Infirmary who looked at me for a minute, and then turned round to another little fellow and said, 'He 's daft' ?)

Here is an experience I had last week. I found a very tall, hook-nosed, white-haired, blue-eyed woman, in a long grey cloak, hat with mauve trimming, and enormous red flowers as large as rhododendrons—waiting at the foot of my stair. Was I the Rev. Mr. Struthers ? Did I know —— ——. Well, she was his own sister, his lawful sister, and they had not spoken for nineteen years. She heard he was dying, and she wanted to be reconciled. Yes, she was married, lawfully married to —— ——. How long had she been married ? She wished she had brought her marriage lines with her, for she was lawfully married, but she had a copy of the register in her father's family Bible. Her brother was seventy-two, she was sixty-eight. Had she been many years married ? No, not many. How many ? She had been out in Philadelphia, and had come home twenty years ago, and it was since then she had got married. What year was it ? She wished she had brought her marriage lines, indeed she had thought of bringing them, for she was lawfully married. Could she not give me an idea ? Well, she wanted to be reconciled to her brother. He had a pair of gold spectacles belonging to her and a rocking-chair she had brought from Philadelphia, cost seven and a half dollars. Yes, I said, but when were

you married? Oh, it wasn't very long since. Now, surely you can say if it 's ten years, or five, or twenty. When was it? Well, sir, to tell the truth, for it doesn't do to tell a lie, I was married last Saturday week! . . .

To the same

Nov. 26, 1885.

MY DEAR BOB —Fortified by your tea, cheered by your apples, comforted by your plaid, and instructed by your *Times*, I safely accomplished my journeyings to Leeds, to Dumfries, Whithorn, Stranraer, and Colfin—all of which, by dexterous, yet honest, strictly honest management, I circumvented at a minimum of cost. I found Leeds most uninteresting. Attended a Liberal meeting of the now defeated Prof. Rücken; and a High Church evening service and sermon—the former beautiful but unintelligible, the latter intelligible but not beautiful. Picked up in a second-hand book shop a book I had long looked for in vain—the Autobiography of my grandfather's brother, John Struthers, which I read in the train, and finding it much better than I had anticipated, came to the conclusion that the Struthers were a poor but not dishonest race, and that there had been distinct promise of ability in the stock some time ago. Said J. S. had some humour, more conceit, a wonderful love of nature, and was a good man, and, I was pleased to find, the son of good parents.

To a Friend in Glasgow

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Dec. 3, 1885.

MY DEAR MR. C——,—We are to have a soiree here this day week—good tea, etc., and better addresses. Are you willing to be a musician to us like Jubal, Orpheus, Asaph, Jeduthun, Miriam, and King David? You would get a ten-cent meal at my house, and while the rest—my elders expect over four hundred people, mostly intelligent—are eating and drinking, you would preside at the piano,

and play melancholy Scotch music—'The Flowers o' the Forest,' 'There 's nae Covenant noo, Jean,' 'Ca' the ewes,' and above all, any Highland laments of bagpipe effects, one or two high-class pieces—'Songs without words,' simple, beautiful, touching. I would like my people to be happy, and the world to see that we can keep music out of the wrong place and put it in the right place. Now, I know this is an awfully bold thing to propose, but I know it would add immensely to the pleasure of everybody, and not least of some of the old folks who would pretend to object. The remuneration will *not* exceed £200, which is more than we have ever given Patti or Nicolini, or whatever her name is. You would stay overnight with me, and make arrangements for further visits.

We shall have an interval for fruit, during which you will have further opportunities of showing you are not offended at my boldness.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee. We all know here you are a right good speaker—show you are a performer, even upon stringed instruments.

State of the poll:—

Reasons for not going	2978
Reasons for going	6895
Majority .	3917

J. P. STRUTHERS,
Returning Officer.

To the same

52 ELDON ST., *Dec.* 5, 1885.

MY DEAR MR. C——, —Your kind but grievous letter came in a few minutes ago.

I am very sorry indeed for the reason that stands in the way of your coming.

Our programme looks bare. I thought it would be so nice to surprise our folks, and pictured their faces when

they found the best thing had not been told them. Then you would have had an opportunity of saying something to us either in the votes of thanks, or in the remarks of friends. You could have given us a nice little running commentary in music all the time we were at tea, now taking us back to childhood, or two hundred years ago, away to the Highlands—or far-off lands. But alas!

(Here interval of ten minutes for weeping.)

A change would have done you good. The soft sea air would have given you a fearful spasm of neuralgia, and then it would have vanished in a moment. And to think there are thousands of angels, and yourself besides, all standing idle so far as music is concerned, and our ears with their respective drums—oh dear, oh dear!—Yours lachrymosely, J. P. STRUTHERS.

Will your cruel heart not relent, even yet?

To Mr. Robert Allan

1886.

. . . FOUR years last Monday since I left Whithorn. Four years on Tuesday since I got the gold and pearl studs. I had them on at a dinner party in Greenock a few weeks ago, and several ladies fell deeply in love with—them, I could see.

I shall write when I have time to tell you, as you wished, any evil I hear about any of our quondam friends.—Yours in the bonds of charity, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

. . . WAS rummaging last week, and came on a pile of your letters—one of seven years ago telling me 'My London cousins are here, and I would like you to meet them.' Ah! little did I think then or afterwards, amid all your angry protestations and categorical denials, that to-day I should be sending my most dutiful regards to one of them as your wife.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. Alex. Ritchie, Whithorn

(When called to the Cathedral charge, Dunblane.)

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
May 24, 1886.

MY DEAR RITCHIE,—Don't think I didn't see all about it in the papers, but remember I am human, and even if I hadn't been run off my feet these last eight days I am not sure but envy would have prevented me from wishing you all joy in your good luck. I have spent some happy hours in the Cathedral, and, please God, I may spend some more yet. But don't be afraid. I won't put you in the painful position of refusing to let me preach.

Would Mrs. Ritchie rather be in Gourock? Greta, of course, will cast her head and look fu' skeigh, but I 'll not forget what she said, or the lovely Galloway accent with which she said it either. Kindest regards to all honorary colonels and ex-captains.

Farewell, turnips! Farewell, Glasserton Row! Farewell, O pend! Farewell, thou grapes! Farewell, Millisle! Farewell, Garlieston carriage! Farewell, Whauphill! Farewell, ye Wigton Martyrs! Welcome, Newton-Stewart! Welcome, Palnure and Parton and New Galloway! Welcome, carriage for 'Stranraer to Edinburgh!' Welcome, 'Stirling and the North'! Welcome, Wallace's Monument! Welcome, Bridge of Allan spa! Welcome, Ruskin's window! Welcome, Leighton's pulpit! Welcome, a short visit from Struthers, late of Whithorn! Welcome, gas! Welcome, early newspaper! 'O to be wi' Ritchie!'[1] . . .

To the Rev. James Denney

(On the occasion of his marriage.)

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
June 15, 1886.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Why didn't you tell me all when I was with you at your Communion? I had heard pretty

[1] It is not difficult to see that the writer had great confidence in his correspondent's knowledge of the utterances of their Covenanting forefathers.

definite statements before that time, and was in momentary expectation of a Book of Revelation. I need hardly say it was a great astonishment to me when I first heard it.

Homer nodding, Paul and Barnabas quarrelling, Peter swearing, Paul swaggering on the paddle-box and saying he had saved the ship—such were a few of the parallels that passed through my mind. I could have imagined you also joining in these frailties; but falling in love, and carrying on a love suit—I thought all that had passed away with the beggarly elements of the former dispensation, with the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose theological attainments, according to your own showing, were of the most unsatisfactory description. But I am right glad, and I pray God that as He has given you every other gift a minister needs, and given you every other gift in the richest measure, He will make His last gift His best.

Please give my most dutiful regards to Miss B——. I have agreed to go to the wedding, and I am much pleased at being asked.

Grant bids me say he will come if you will honestly say you want us both. I have obeyed Grant several times of late to my regret and cost, notably when I refused to buy four pounds of sweets in M.'s for the House of Refuge Women, at fourpence per pound, and got inferior ones at a regular confectioner's at tenpence.

I have not yet fixed on a present for you. Have you any volumes of Leech's sketches? Or do you want a book with some reading in it? Or do you anticipate a dearth of butter knives or fish carvers? Would you prefer some Puritan divines which I could pick up, I am sure, for an old song? I have a Cowper Gray's *Commentary* (Bib. Museum) of no use to the owner or any one else, and Grant has a Jamieson and Fawcett. Have you lots of novels? Or would you like twenty-five thousand blue business envelopes? Or a packet of five hundred disjunction certificates which might come in handy? Or a complete series of the *Greenock Directory*? Have you all Browning, or any of him? Or would you rather have Veitch's *Hamilton*,

or Law's *Alps of Hannibal*? Or a pair of prize bowls? Or a model of a full-rigged ship executed in glass beads by a one-eyed and one-armed man? God bless you and her.—
Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mrs. ——, Whithorn

WHITHORN, *August* 19, 1887.

. . . I AM very very sorry I did not propose baptizing your little son on Monday. I would have counted it a great honour. When a child is baptized the parent or parents renew their promise to be faithful to their Church as well as to God, and they promise to bring up their little one in connection with their Church. You will have opportunity in Liverpool to get him baptized. The congregation have no fixed minister as yet, it is true, but they have ordained ministers preaching to them very often, and any one of them would be immensely delighted to baptize your son. I hope, too, you will get it done publicly. It is more solemn for the parent and more solemn for the people; and especially I think do people like to see a mariner's child baptized. When the child is dedicated to God publicly, it may put you a little about, but the people will all pray for you and your husband and your son. Now, my dear Mrs. ——, I am very earnest on this point. We have often had mothers in your position,[1] and they were always glad afterwards that they had brought their children to church to be received and welcomed publicly into communion with God's people. You don't need to be in any hurry. Baptism is not necessary to salvation. I hope God will spare your boy to be a joy to both of you, and an honour to Himself, but even if he were taken away unbaptized the child would suffer no loss. Either get it done in Liverpool, or perhaps you may be back in Whithorn sooner than you expect, but let it be done by one of your own ministers.

Remember me kindly to your father and mother and sister; and may God bless the little boy.

[1] The father being at sea.

I enclose a certificate which you could show as evidence, if necessary, that you are a member of the Whithorn congregation.—I am, yours faithfully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. W. Wingate Gray

(On the announcement of his marriage.)

GREENOCK, 52 ELDON ST.,
Oct. 15, 1887.

MY DEAR WALTER,—Your comical postcard, with its mixed English and Greek, delighted me much. I was indeed most anxious to write you, but you were not to be found at the last address you gave me—Prince's Pier. I am just going there—or thither—if you do insist on perfect grammar—having an invitation to the trial trip of the P. and O. *Britannia*. I mention this not from pride, or to make you humble, but casually, as it were, and in the most incidental manner, without dwelling a moment on the subject longer than is absolutely necessary.

I don't need to tell you to be humble now. If the possession of such a wife-to-be doesn't make you humble to the very dust, your tutor-as-was needn't try it. No, Walter, nothing should make a man more ashamed of himself than the knowledge which you now have that God had such joy in store for you.

I have had no chance of telling you how much I was delighted with Miss S. I am no judge in the way you are of such things as manners and carriage and grace (I mean outward grace), though even in these respects my judgment coincides with yours as perfectly as the angles at the base of two triangles that have two sides of the one equal to the two sides of the other and the angle, etc., etc.; but even a dog knows when it sees a sweet and bonnie lady, and thy servant is a dog for once. I was hugely delighted; and am more glad than I can tell you. I could have wished for a moment to tell Miss S. that she may be proud of her lad. You know him, too, Walter, and though between ourselves he 's not

exactly and absolutely perfect—still needs one per cent. in fact to be so—yet he 's a good lad, and goodness is worth more than aught else. God bless you, my dear Walter. He has led you both by a right way, I doubt not. I wish you both a very happy time at His Table to-morrow. It is your first *Communion* in a sense. I shall be thinking of you a great deal.—Yours faithfully and hers most dutifully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To a Friend

(*On the birth of his first child.*)

1887.

. . . THE world will be a new world to you now. You have an interest in it for all time such as you never had before, and eternity itself must seem at your very door. I can't write all I feel. I only hope your little daughter will be a bride for the Lamb, and be the means of bringing many many with her. Be ambitious for her, and give God no rest! Aim at the very highest crown for her that it is possible for a woman to get. God take you all under the shadow of His wings.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

CHAPTER VII

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER-DIARY

1887

> The greatest thing a human soul ever does is to *see* something and tell what it *saw* in a plain way. To *see* clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion all in one.'—RUSKIN.

IN the course of a long correspondence before our marriage took place, my husband was in the habit of keeping a letter-diary for my benefit. He always carried a sheet of paper in his pocket for that purpose, and wrote a line or two at any odd time and place available. 'In my little room, just going to preach,' 'Waiting for the Belfast boat, 4 A.M.,' 'Under a street lamp,' were frequent headings. He held detail to be the gold dust of correspondence, and wrote his letters accordingly. Meeting a friend one day whose son was a missionary in China, he expressed the hope that she wrote very frequently. 'I find it very difficult to get anything to write that would interest him,' was the reply. 'Tell him,' said my husband with much earnestness, 'of every dish you have broken in the kitchen.' One little detail, he often said, was worth a thousand adjectives.

From a Letter-Diary

I suppose the Judgment is at the last day—not at death, when we pass into glory but are not openly acknowledged or acquitted. We lived in the world, were tempted, tried,

misjudged. We sinned before men—our acquittal must be before the world. Besides, our account is not closed till the last day. The dead still speak. Moses is still winning men to Christ, and Paul and John. It is not known how much they have done for God till the last day. Many a man has died, and after he was in his grave for centuries his works were brought to light. His writings were discovered, and did good after they had lain long in oblivion. Little children will look at your sketches in Miss Charlesworth's books, and, it may be, in some other books yet, long after you and I are dead, and they will be helped to Christ by them. I think Beecher says in his *Life's Thoughts* that men like Moses and Luther begin to live after they are dead. As to the state of the dead, one thing is certain—there is no need for them to rest. One moment of the vision of God will renew their strength and youth. They are in Paradise, but they can't be as happy as they are to be hereafter. Body and soul are separate. They must wait in hope and perfect confidence. They *must* know one another. Christ spoke of the world of spirits, and He said to the thief, 'Thou shalt be with Me.' Paradise will be to us what He made it. We shall follow Him. There will be all the dead who are already there to become friends with, and there will be the joyful welcoming of those who come every hour. That itself would be work and happiness enough until the Judgment Day. Every soul that comes will come with a history of his own and a story of God's love, and will be able to tell what happened before he left this world. One moment of Heaven will banish all weariness and pain. Never was there sorrow like Christ's sorrow, and yet in six and thirty hours pain and all its effects had passed away, save the marks in His hands and His feet, which apparently are to continue there for ever and ever.

Love is the grandest of all things and is bound hereafter, and in measure here, if one may so speak, to be infinite, all-embracing; and yet of course, though they don't marry

in the Resurrection, it 's not because there is no love or no recognition, but because there is a grander love and a closer union than even the tie of marriage.

Perfect trust will have cast out fear. Our friends in Heaven won't have a bit of anxiety. Will they keep count of time? Will they say, 'It 's 19th May on earth'? I think they will. Christ was three days in Paradise, and the angels are bound to set their watches by human time.

I don't think we should limit the coming of the Son of Man to death. All providences and opportunities of serving God are comings of Christ—all answers to prayers, all striving for the souls of others, marriage—anything by which He manifests His love to us.

There has been a terrible tragedy in our town. It is a great dishonour to it. I asked my people, 'Have we all done *our best* for Greenock'? We never can afford to be off our guard at any moment. One careless look or gesture may ruin a soul.

There was a baptism to-day—an Andrew Lang. The father's name was John, and I said it was John the Baptist who brought Andrew to Christ, and that was to be his work to his little one. And Andrew, although his name is only once mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and that in a mere catalogue, and we would say he had done nothing in comparison to Peter, was the one who brought Peter to Christ, and Peter it was who opened Heaven to the Gentile believers. We sang Ps. cxliv., last four verses. Turn them up, and see how appropriate they are.

I have had some very happy talks with my young communicants. One girl told me that the 45th Psalm impressed her at her sister's funeral some years ago. We had sung 'Her fellow virgins following,' etc. A lad, too, told me with tears that it was love to his sweetheart that brought him to Christ. I thought that very bonnie.

I fancy one never thinks how dear our prayers must be to God, till we know how dear one's sweetheart's letters are! Strange that we should know the Heavenly by the earthly, and yet the earthly is just the Heavenly.

A good woman, although she wears no jewels, does inspire reverence.

It is always a solemn thing preaching to people whom we in all likelihood will never see again.

Would you think M. was in any way connected with your destiny and mine? It was in 1872. Mr. Murdoch, the assistant Greek Professor, who had met me at the High School when he took our class during the illness of Dr. MacKinlay (who died shortly after, and left me £30), had been Dad Wilson's tutor for a number of years, and he asked me to take his place during the summer months at Stewart Hall, where the Wilsons stayed. One day in July old Mr. Wilson asked me if I would agree to come back next summer, Mr. Murdoch, of course, taking charge of Dad in the winter. I was very proud and pleased, and said Yes, and Mr. Wilson, to my amazement, shook hands and said, 'It 's a bargain.' I learned afterwards that a lady was going to Pau with her son, and had been recommended to take me as his tutor, and when I was asked if I was free, I said No. M. (I found out by accident, talking with him eight years after) went in my place. I lost the advantage of a stay in France, but through Wilson I met Gray, through Gray I met Bob Allan, went round the world.—Oh, but weren't you sold there! You expected me to say, 'Through Gray I met you,' but I was reserving that for another paragraph.

I am to be speaking to-day of Paul's stoning at Lystra. Just as Stephen found Paul when he was being stoned, so Paul found Timothy. That stoning would touch Paul's heart more than any other trial. It looked as if God were paying him back. And yet when Paul gets home, not a

word about his trials. Only they 'told what great things the Lord had done for them.'

I fancy the gift of laughter and humour is given us to make up for our want of knowledge of the future. The angels see God's face, and don't need to laugh to make them bear up under the world's sorrows.

'But this thou hast,' Rev. ii. 6. The memory of what we have lost, the knowledge of what we still have—two motives for turning to God.

'I suppose the world itself could not contain the books,' etc. John's Gospel, a little pamphlet one can buy for a penny—read in a couple of hours—that 's the life of Christ: the first half, the record of a part of the first week of His ministry and a few conversations; the second half, the description of the last twenty hours of His life. What passed in Gethsemane and on the Cross and in Hades, had taken all Eternity to prepare—infinite wrath, infinite love, and so John was not using a figure of speech when he said the world would not hold the books. It was not a time for slipshod, reckless speech.

'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.'—Moses summing up his own history. It was a record of his own experience. We know about him from the cradle to the grave—and after. And it might have been a prophecy. Asher was on the frontier, and might have kept out idolatry. It should have possessed Tyre and Sidon, and might have been a missionary tribe. Yet there is not a single famous man in the Bible belonging to that tribe, and only one woman, Anna the prophetess. Moses' promise to Asher was not a promise for the day of trouble only, but for the whole of life. God's presence should be looked for every day.

Num. xiv. A nice meeting to-night. 'A year for a day.' I spoke, I hope earnestly, for I felt earnestly, to the young folks and the children on the solemnity of the minutes and

days *now*. The years under twenty were the important ones. Our action at the great moments of life determines our whole life, and is determined by the actions of previous years. I told them most of us had been wandering in the wilderness, no further forward than we were years ago, just through our sin. They were to enter the land we were put out of. But to those who were old I said, though we had lost years, the best part of our life—eternity—was still to come, and we could win it, and could help our children and those around us to win what we had lost, even in this world.

Wasn't it a wonderful Providence, 'Jesus in the midst,' so that He could speak easily, when on the Cross, to both His fellow-sufferers, and they could both watch Him?

Isn't it like God—sending an earthquake to loosen the prisoner's bands and break the jailor's heart? An exuberance of power—doing as much for a good man and a bad man as He had done at the resurrection of His Dear Son.

I don't take readily to shaking hands, and I have found out that people have been hurt because I didn't shake hands. I have always to think of doing it. It's not natural to me, and yet I can remember wondering at other people for not shaking hands with me long ago.

Isn't that a wonderful piece of insight into the nature of devils?—'Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?' Poor Paul, lashed and beaten and shipwrecked, but Satan afraid of him. 'But who are ye?'—that's the way he answers his own friends.

I read the close of Rom. viii. for the children, to contrast Paul's happiness with what I read last week of the great Khalif Abd-el-Rahman (lived 960) who conquered Spain, and had a world-wide name. Reigned forty-nine years. After his death they found a paper containing the number of days he had been perfectly free from trouble—only

fourteen. The child of God has trouble every day—but the trouble is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

Communion, April 1887.—I have a fine subject for to-morrow—Prov. xxx. 4: 'What is His name, and what is His Son's name? if thou canst tell.' Agur seems to have been a man for whom the world would have been too many, but for faith—a man who saw what a queer, odd, wonderful, glorious world this is—bad children on it, and busy ants, atheists, and conies and greyhounds, and his two companions who listened to him and drew out his thoughts. And just because he kept his eyes open and sought after God, he hit on the greatest of all truths when he had imagined he had only struck the greatest of all difficulties. 'What is His Son's name?' And just because there were two or three who feared the Lord and spake often one to another, and thought upon His name, according to Malachi—the Lord wrote a book of remembrance. What is His name? Why, He had no name but the names He got through the work of Redemption. His throne is built on Mercy and Truth. Christ owes all His glory to our salvation. In Heaven He is the Slain Lamb, and His new name is to be written on *us*. Every one of his people will share a peculiar name with Him. His name would not be complete without that. Poor Agur thought he had hit on an unanswerable question. He had just caught a glimpse of a pearl of great price. It is now getting near three o'clock, and I don't like to go to bed though I am tired and sleepy. This will be the strangest Communion of all my life hitherto. If Christ would only make me come out of the ivory palaces with my garments smelling of aloes and myrrh and cassia, so that I might win some souls for Him to-day! It will vex me beyond measure if I get a bride, and Christ doesn't. So I think I 'll sit up all night and pray to Him—not that I would trust in my prayers, but I do wish Him and me to be rejoicing as we never did before.

Christ's first moment of glory as the God-Man was spent beside the grave. He seems to have lingered in the grave, folding the napkin, and seeing how good Joseph and Nicodemus had been to Him when He was dead. So the grave was the first palace of the Great King—'Of aloes, myrrh,' etc., Ps. xlv.

My father and I parted on Wednesday night amid rain and storm, and he prayed a moment on a lonely bit of the road. I have never heard of any vice amongst my ancestors on either side.

May, 1887.—It was proposed at the Presbytery that our Church should have a little magazine for the young people, and I was asked to undertake it. I had not heard a word about it, and am glad I had nothing to do in the proposal. It was laid on me. I have this comfort, it 's not work of my own seeking. I took it up as I thought it was God's bidding. A tremendous lot will depend on the *name*. It couldn't exist even in imagination without your illustrations. Are you willing to do three a month—for nothing?

Sabbath, May 22nd, 1887.—We had a baptism to-day, a William Howie, a connection of the Howies of Lochgoin. Another son was the first baby I baptized in Greenock. He was called John Struthers Howie. A previous Howie was Mary Gray, born the day her grandfather died—the eighty-fifth grandchild. I always prepare a new address for baptisms, and try to get a nice story. The one to-day I read last week in Russell's *Middle Watch*. It was of the poor creature saved off a derelict in the Bay of Biscay, by the boat's crew of the *Amethyst*. After he had been on board a little they were amazed to hear him speak—'There is another man.' I said the parents did well to be proud of their baby, but it was another man in danger of being lost and in need of salvation.

I write out my sermons, or rather seven pages as a rule—

the chief ideas, if I may lay claim to ideas; and I follow on the lines of what I have written down. I don't commit anything to memory.

I helped a great many women to-day, mostly for your sake. There were some young and pretty ones, and I was polite to them, and I was very kind to the old ones. One old woman, red-cheeked and white-haired, over seventy, had a lot of honeysuckle slips. I helped her into the carriage, and she said, 'A body always gets some one to be kind to them.' I asked her when the slips would be in flower. Not this year? No, she said, nor next either, but the one after. I helped her out at Cassillis, and hoped she would see the honeysuckle in flower. She stood waiting for the man to take her ticket, though she might have gone off, evidently unwilling to do anything wrong, and nodded very kindly to me as the train went off.

You ask me when my life in Christ began. I could not tell. Sometimes I have thought it was long, long ago, when I was thirteen or so. One Sabbath night, after Mr. Dunlop of Paisley preached, I prayed very earnestly, and felt differently in prayer from what I had ever done before. But many a time before that I had asked God to save me. And when I was a boy of eight or nine, my brother and I wrote out a covenant and signed it, and I, at least, felt very proud of myself! It can't have been then; and yet was I not seeking after Him? And sometimes I hoped God had saved me, and called me to be His own from the time I was a baby, for my mother prayed very much for me. All I can say is, that I do wish to be God's child, and I honestly think I have cast myself on His mercy in Christ. I do agree with you that those who are brought up in God's fear are brought to Him imperceptibly. At any rate I would rather trust a constant crying after Him than any past sensation. Our best way is to throw ourselves afresh on Him.

'Peter said, *Lord*, I have never eaten,' etc. Is it right

to say Peter recognised Christ's *voice*? Christ has the same voice in glory He had on earth. We know He spoke the same old language. I like all ideas that make one feel Christ is the same *now* as *then*.

I began Peter to-day—first two verses. I began on March 20th, 1881, but just got into the second chapter. I thought the people didn't like it. Now, you and I will talk to Peter some day, and it would be dreadful to have to tell him I couldn't get on with his book, but he will be pleased at you setting me on it again.

I enjoyed talking last night about Aaron's rod. Aaron a type of Christ, whom God was wearying to manifest to the world. And the rod a type of the beauty and fruitfulness and eternal life of Christ—bud, blossoms, ripe almonds—no feeling that the best is past, but life everlasting, new buds ever sprouting. I liked the quoting Ps. cx.—'Thou art a priest for ever'—that is, even now.

'O Death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin.' I spoke of the complete triumph we have over death—can look it in the face—can welcome it. But most of all is death triumphed over when it is sudden in the case of a godly man, when he never needs to go out of his way, so to speak, or make special preparation, but dies almost before he knows it. The three heads were—(1) When death leaves no sting (the godly dead); (2) when death leaves some sting (to the godly who remain—vexed at the thought that they might have been kinder to those who are gone); (3) when death leaves all its sting (the ungodly who were warned and invited and had determined to repent and were hopelessly lost).

It is a terrible time when a little child meets its first great sorrow. A poor woman told me the other night that her wee boy had seen his father drunk for the first time. He danced about the house and said, 'Oh, mother, I never knew what the Band of Hope was till to-night!'

God made Judas Christ's companion, not that he might betray Christ, but that he might love Christ—just as He put Christ between the two thieves that He might be equally near both of them, and help them if they would take His help. I once preached in —— on this subject, and a man was very angry with me for saying Christ gave Judas the sop as a mark of friendship. I said it was like a mother giving the best on the table to a bad son to try and touch his heart. The man said, 'He gave it to him to point out to John who was to betray Him.' I said, 'Do you mean to say Christ handed him the morsel, went through the form of treating him as the honoured guest, just to point him out?' That was a most dishonouring conception. Christ could have pointed him out with His finger, or said, 'Judas'; but his bowels yearned after him.

Do you ever feel disagreeable when you have no reason for it? Here I am back to my house after talking at my meeting about God's asking the Israelites to begin every month with the blowing of trumpets (cheerfulness, etc.), yet I felt a little bitter, and I don't know at what. I am pretty tired running about. I can hardly write, the muscles of my hand and arm are so queer. I can hardly bend my right knee. I am a little annoyed at having to go to Glasgow to-morrow to a funeral, but the fellow is a great friend of mine, and his mother, before she died, made out a list of those she wanted, and I was one of them—and yet I am ill-natured a bit. I am not so good as you think. I have a surly bit in me.

Mr. Y——, a very godly man, called and told me a story he said he never meant to tell me in this world. One week he had not been well, and had had many things to annoy him. On Sabbath morning he had to go back to bed, he was so weak. He fell asleep and dreamed, and in his dream accused God of not caring for him, of allowing ever so many things to happen to him, and remaining quite indifferent. In his dream there came this answer, 'I have graven thee

upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before me.' With that he awoke. His wife and children came in from church. He looked at his hands and said, 'Well, I don't think I could forget a man if I had his name engraven there. I 'm only finite, and God is infinite.' Then he rose and dressed and came to church in the afternoon, a little late. As he came in I was reading the text, 'I have graven thee upon the palms,' etc., and I said, 'Very possibly there are a number of people here accusing God of not caring for them. I 'm certain there is at least one, and God's own answer to him is this—'I have,' etc. Then I gave out a Psalm. Isn't that very wonderful? For I hadn't seen Mr. Y—— that week, and wasn't thinking of him. It shows surely that God is willing to use one, and does use one, and I hope it will show God that I am willing to be used.

The happiest congregational meeting we ever had—not a jarring word; so we have resolved to buy the new site at £480, and sell our church for £500. The new feu-duty is only £2, 16s. as against £7, 14s. I began by giving out the Psalm, 'O send Thy light forth.' Then our oldest elder, Mr. Simpson, prayed. Then we sang, 'Hear, Isr'el's Shepherd'; and then one of the members, Mr. M'Bride, prayed. Then we sang, 'The meek in judgment He will guide,' and our precentor prayed. The motion was then moved by a Mr. Pollock, and seconded by Captain Ralston. Then we sang, 'Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest,' and a young lad, elder-elect, prayed, asking God, now that we had resolved to leave the old building where His word had been preached so long, that no stone should cry against us. Some more business was done, and then Mr. Black prayed and the blessing was pronounced. The prayers were all short and beautiful. I was pleased to find some of the young lads and members along looking at the site after the meeting.

I told my elders that when we should begin our new church, I would not ask one halfpenny from a single soul.

I think it degrades ministers greatly to be beggars, and I don't see why people can't build their own churches.

I wonder if it is right to lay past money beyond a certain amount ? It is dreadful to grudge money to God's work, which is waiting, to lay past for years that may never come. I wish we could lay our heads together and determine what is right. I often think it would be fine to have a house about the Mid Quay—the old Quay, facing the water (the worst bit of Greenock lies at the back of it)—to build a plain, neat house, with a very little flower-plot just to remind people of God, so that our very presence would do the unhappy creatures there good. There are about ten public-houses all close to one another. I doubt we make our lives too easy. The other world does look so near, and it will be awful to lose the crowns God meant us to have. We 'll be provided for, though it would be harder for you than for me if we had nothing laid past. What do you think ?

I have been preparing for the prayer-meeting. Balaam's last prophecy. It is very wonderful how God strove with him, showing him the coming of Christ, His reign, the fall of Assyria and the western powers, and yet—all in vain. It is dreadful to think what the doom of ungodly ministers will be. . . . We had a nice meeting. I spoke of God's love to Balaam, letting him see His Son and His glory in the distance, making time and eternity pass before him. I said such an hour comes to every sinner. God gives him a sight of Christ and of Heaven when He strives with him. He sees the King in His beauty, and the land of far distances. The saint, like Moses, sees less in this world, but he sees more and more in Glory. Their sight of Christ is to come. Balaam's knowledge of God is a proof that God deals with the heathen. He is not far from any one of us. We don't need to know much about God to be saved ; we simply need to cast ourselves on His mercy. Men were saved even in Christ's day by Christ Himself, and they didn't know

Him. A poor heathen may have no name for God, but if he casts himself on the mercy of that Being whom he feels near him and about him, if he uses the light he has, he is saved : saved, of course, entirely through the righteousness of Christ, but his knowledge of Him may be nothing. Our sin in not sending missionaries does not lie in this, that their souls are lost through our fault, but in that we were careless whether they were lost or not. God gives us the work, the opportunity, the chance of being co-workers with Him and joint-heirs with Christ. If we won't, are they to perish simply through our fault ? Certainly not. God will do the work Himself. 'If these should hold their peace, the very stones will cry out.' The Spirit will strive. We cannot—no one can—flee from His presence. Every savage who is lost deliberately rejects God's Spirit striving with him, even as we do, and as men did before the Flood. But if we have done nothing for the savage, we are guilty of his blood. I feel very strongly on this point. I am sure it is in agreement with God's Word and our Calvinistic principles. Balaam, one of the cleverest of men, might have filled Moses' place. Israel needed a poet, yet he is less famous than his ass. When he said, 'I cannot go with you,' he bade fair to be one of the heroes of faith. His mistake was in asking God a second time when God had said, 'Thou shalt not go with the men.' I fancy his building of the altars was partly to make Balak think he was doing all he could—his best—and partly to prevail on God ; just as we all do kind or good things when we have set our heart on sin. We pray earnestly about some other thing in order to avoid praying about our besetting sin.

I try to talk wisely to my class, and plainly, just as I think a father ought to talk to his children, out of my heart. I tell them anything pleasant or funny I hear, always, of course, trying to win them to God. I want them to look to God every moment of their lives. We often have a very hearty laugh, and often I 'm as solemn as a judge.

'Position as a clergyman.' How can one talk such stuff as that? 'Minister' means servant. And who was it who washed His disciples' feet? And did He not kindle a fire and make breakfast for them after He rose from the dead? Not simply to give them an example how they should do to each other, but because He liked to do it, and it was an honour as well as a joy to the Son of God to make them happy.

I am sorry you read prayers. It is a bad example to the servants, is it not? I suppose, to some extent, one ought to think beforehand what one would say in prayer; but could you not let the chapter you read at worship colour or guide your prayers? God speaks to us, and when we speak back to God, it would help us to please Him to use, as far as we can, what He has told us, and that would in great measure keep us from ruts. It is a duty to ask a blessing before meals. However much things go against us, the fact that we get even a bite of bread reminds us we are still in a place of hope. A meal hour is God's summons to us to think of Him and His love.

I think of this text. 'Two men shall be in the field. The one shall be taken, and the other left.' Ten deaths this year. I had my favourite nasty dream the other night —was off on a year's voyage without making any arrangement in my congregation. I woke in misery and great joy.

Salvation Army girl in train yesterday speaking to an old woman. 'I was brought up in the Church of Hengland. We 're hordered to pray for Halbert Hedward Prince of Wales. But does Halbert Hedward pray for hus? No. So I leaves the Church of Hengland.'

I went to the cricket match after I had done my work. I dearly love cricket, but I can honestly say one great reason for going is to show that I don't object to young fellows being happy in the right way.

They wanted me to stay to-night at Hafton, and I do think it would have done me good, but it was my night at the Discharged Prisoners' Aid, and I thought it hardly fair to stay away. Came over and found them all in the hurry of getting ready for their annual week's outing, and the matron asked me not to wait, saying she knew I would not take it ill. Of course I didn't tell her I had been from home. But I was glad I came back. I made a call and found a young fellow drinking whom I have tried to help. Called at another house accidentally. The man said, 'I was expecting you.' 'Why?' 'It's just a year and so many minutes since I signed the pledge, and I thought you would come to see me.'

Last night I came across two policemen looking at a verse in Mark's Gospel by aid of a lantern.

Sabbath, Sept. 11, 1887.—Another Communion Sabbath gone. We began with Ps. cvi.: 'Give praise, etc.; Remember me, Lord,' etc. I preached all day from 1 Tim. iii. 16: 'The mystery of godliness.' My sermon from—'He who was manifest in the flesh.' I fenced the tables from the next clause: 'Was justified in the Spirit.' There is a difference between the ways in which Christ was treated by the Holy Spirit and by wicked spirits. The Holy Spirit rests on Him, abides, loves, carries on His work, etc. They believe in Him, pray to Him, hate Him, want to get away from Him. They say, 'If Thou be the Son of God, do this or that,' but never, 'Forgive—help me!' I served the tables from—'Seen of angels.' Some of the reasons why, and some of the times, they saw Him. To-night I spoke on the words, 'Received up into glory.' Christ's manhood is not only glorified now; it is actually full of the Godhead's fulness. His manhood here was lowly; now Christ as man is as much God as man. He sees us with His human eye. The children, all sitting in the front seat of the gallery, were very attentive. It was very interesting to see the wee creatures looking over on the people below. They

seem to like it. I didn't 'roar' any to-day. When I was going up the pulpit stairs, I repeated your words. I was the last to communicate, and the time is short, for one has to rise and speak, but I hope Christ will complete my prayers.

This has been a very happy Sabbath to me, 25th Sept. 1887. I preached in Stranraer, forenoon and afternoon, and then walked out here a little over five miles, had dinner and walked to Meoul school-house, and preached there. This is the third time I have preached in the school-house, and I have given two lectures. There is no church within four miles. Then I walked back. The people had two vehicles at church, but I think it wrong to drive if I can walk. I heard a Greenock man say last week when speaking about a string of cabs at a church door, 'It 's fine to see the lapsed masses waiting outside to drive the saved people home.'

Stranraer.—It seems that a great many bankers ('bankiers,' they call them here) were in church yesterday afternoon. One of them, an old Whithorn friend, told me he was greatly delighted, said he felt the tears in his eyes, and it was a long time since he felt that way! It cheered me a little—did the man's tears. One man I called on works at digging drains—and here is the rate of pay. The man starts at six in the morning, and walks four miles, and gets 6d. a rood (20 feet); the drain had to be 3 feet 2 inches deep, and he does two roods a day. Total wages 6s. a week. He walks forty-eight miles, and has to keep his tools in repair. It 's Lord Galloway's ground, and labour is scarce, and men plenty. Isn't that a hard life?

The ——s have got six presents in twenty-six years—their portraits and a silver tray and afternoon tea service and a terrific mantelpiece clock, one of those absurd things with Michael Angelo or some other cove striking an attitude, and the clock quite in the shade—in two ways. It must weigh half a cwt. And thrice they have got one

hundred guineas. I hope we 'll get nothing. I think less and less of ministers' presents every day. I 'm dreffful glad you don't wish anything. One can't speak freely to people after getting a present from them. They think they have done their duty, and that you are ungrateful.

The Sabbath work question is a great difficulty. A remarkably fine man and his wife wish to join, and I have urged him, no matter what it costs, to refuse to work on Sabbath. He has only three hours every six weeks, but I think God's command is clear. Yet it vexes me. But I am sure God will honour any man that gives up anything to honour Him, and that he would never regret it.

December 6th, 1887.—We had our quarterly Temperance meeting to-night. When I got to the church one of the elders told me one of my people, a Mr. Cook, had been badly hurt—had fallen from the hold of a ship. Just as he was speaking, two men came and told me he was dead. He was in church yesterday, and I was speaking of death. The last Psalm we sung was ' Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale.' I said the valley of the shadow of death was the valley of the shadow of Christ's wing. He had not only gone before us, but He went with us. Most godly people I had known had got over almost dry-shod. Mr. Cook never spoke after his hurt. He has left a wife and one boy of ten. Theirs was the first house in which I saw our Temperance card framed. The congregation were greatly impressed. It made our meeting a very solemn one.

' The Lord helped the Levites that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord.' God helps us mysteriously in our daily labour. Some days we get on well. It was thinking of how He might help the lithographer last week that made me choose the text. Are you not sorry for poor Uzzah, touching the Ark ? We are often like him—afraid the mercy-seat will fall. ' Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious ? ' This was ordinary work. It was dangerous

work. It was neglected work. We may have joy in our ordinary tasks, but most of all God has joy in helping us when we make a place ready for Him. He had waited hundreds of years and still dwelt in a tent—every other body housed; and yet when they began to take His tent to Jerusalem, He was as pleased and happy as though they had been asked to do it then for the first time.

Called again on the man who has left the church, simply because it was my duty. His great objection is—'A man should come and tell you frankly if he has any fault to find with you,' and yet he had his cushion and Bibles away, and seats taken in another church without ever telling me!!

Dec. 1887.—I 'm glad, glad the first number of the magazine has turned out so well. I hope it will brighten many a home, and help many a little one to turn to God.

Sabbath, Dec. 25, 1887.—This has been a very happy day. Morning, 1 Pet. iv. 2—'The rest of your time' (R.V.). The rest of our time means for most of us the *least* of our time. It might mean for all of us the *best* of our time. Afternoon, Prov. xxiii. last verse—'They have beaten me, and I felt it not.' A Temperance sermon. The drunkard is a man without feeling. He does not feel his sin, or his shame, or other people's suffering, or God's love. Then I took Mr. Jerdan's class. 'How did God create man?' and Ps. lxxvi.; with some remarks on the Reformation under Henry VIII.

CHAPTER VIII

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER-DIARY

1888–1889

'God likes us to show Him all the letters we get and all we write. Letters have been, and are, the most important documents in the world.'—*The Morning Watch.*

Sabbath, Jan. 15, 1888.—I felt this a very solemn day. Began with Ps. cxi., a very bonnie one; then 1 Pet. iv. 'If judgment begin at the house of God.' God's people's sins are more grievous to Him than the sins of His enemies. He begins with them to show the wicked His holiness, and to give the wicked time to repent and flee from the wrath to come—like a schoolmaster who goes over with his best boys the thing he is going to ask the lazy ones later. *Afternoon.*—'That disciple which leaned back on His breast at supper' (R.V.). I like the text very much. John lay and looked up the way a child does on its mother's knee. Christ had a dreadful hour before Him, and John didn't understand it, and yet Christ let him lean his head on His breast. And years after, when Christ was in glory, He makes John write down that bit about 'leaning his head,' as if He wanted to show He was not ashamed to be called his Friend as well as his God. That was the closest man ever came to Christ—except when Judas kissed Him—and it is the hour of John's highest honour, but it was also the hour of his sorest trial. Christ was to be betrayed by Judas. We get nearest Christ when we are partakers of His sufferings, or, at least, we have to get near Him then in order to be sharers of His glory afterwards. Christ told who was to be traitor. He 'll answer any question about our personal salvation, but He won't tell us things of com-

paratively little moment, like the future. He told Peter about *his* death, because Peter had lost his character, and had to be reinstated with all possible honour; but when the question is about John's future, the answer is, 'If I will—all is in My hand. Let it be enough. John is the disciple whom I love. Love is sufficient. John is all right.'

I 'm afraid I won't get my coat by Thursday. I really will dress better for my own sake as well as yours. I 'm very careless—found to-day I was wearing two boots of different patterns!

The love of Browning comes all in a night's time. It came to me in a sudden.

March 12, 1888.—Jim Scott, a very nice clever fellow at Merchiston, had to lead in debate to-morrow evening:—'That street music should not be encouraged.' He asked his father to ask me to send him some poetry or something. I sent him in prose a letter (written on scraps of all kinds of paper) from an organ-grinder's monkey, telling of all its sufferings—its mother dead of a broken heart through hearing 'Home, sweet home' forty-two times a day, forced to hear of her nineteen children spending the nights in low lodging-houses with their Italian masters. I made it as tragic as I could; said the letter was written to dictation by a thimble-rigger, who had been educated at Fettes (the Merchiston boys hate the Fettesians), while its master, Giovanni Carabino, was asleep. Could you draw *to-day* a monkey image on a piece of cardboard? It would do for the monkey's card.

Stranraer, April 1888.—Had a pretty busy day. Addressed a Temperance Meeting last night. Got home about 10.30. To-day public worship at 11.30 and 1.30. Took a Bible class and Sabbath school from five to six. Went to Reformatory and spoke to ninety boys about Heaven.

They are drafted in from all parts of the country. Many of them read their verse with a strong English accent. Then went to baptize a baby at 7.30, preached a little sermon. We never baptize privately unless there be good reasons. The mother is not well, and the father works in Dumfries, and had come for the baptism. Then after that I had to walk three miles to get my hat from a farmer, who had taken mine and left his, and three miles back.

Saturday, April 14, 1888.—I 'm not getting on well with my sermons at all.

Sabbath, April 15.—I went to bed at 10.45, and rose at 4.20 this morning. I had no one helping me to-day. The Psalm that came in course was the 117th, the shortest chapter in the Bible, and also the middle one—594 before it, and 594 after it ; and it is full of praise. I said it was like a commanding ridge from which we looked back on all the chapters of past providence and forward on all to come, and there was eternal truth and loving-kindness. It was the Psalm Cromwell's men sang when the Scotch were defeated at Dunbar. I said it might, by God's grace, commemorate Christ's victory over us ; like the rock Meloria, of which the Genoese Admiral said, ' A defeat rendered it famous ; a victory would render it immortal.' I served the tables very shortly, taking bits from the Transfiguration. 1st, ' This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' 2nd, ' They feared as they entered into the cloud.' 3rd, ' They saw no man, but Jesus only.' Closed by saying we spoke of *coming down* from the mount. We would like to make three tabernacles, but Christ went with us. We should never go any lower than we were. Each Communion we should go higher, and continue at that level till the next. We had a very wet day. My father there both times. I am sure he must have got a drenching. I went a good bit of the way home with him at night, and we prayed together before parting.

The longer I live, the more I love the Psalms.

In James Halley's letters to my second cousin, he calls him 'greatest of all little sparrows': the word in Greek nearest our name being—a sparrow. It is the word our Saviour uses—'five sparrows.'

I dearly love having the wee magazine to do.

My prayer-meeting is the happiest hour in the week.

Sabbath, May 20, 1888.—I liked my afternoon subject very much to-day—Peter losing heart when he saw the waves. It was love that made him think of walking on them, but he hadn't thought of all that his request implied. I fancy all God's people want, like him, to do things beyond their strength, and God helps them to do them after they have seen it is not in them. Peter didn't swim when he thought he was sinking. It was walking to Christ he had in view—not getting back into the boat. We may get through a difficulty. What we want is to get Christ to remove it.

Do you know that the events of the day on which David fled up Mt. Olivet are related more fully than those of any other day in the Bible, excepting that on which Christ went up for sin, but not His own?

God exalted the blind beggar in John ix. very gloriously. The Pharisees reviled him, cast him out: he became their judge, Christ's champion. He was told the very secret of God: 'Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.'

You wanted me to give you a new name, but your German is all at fault—there's no such word—at least in the Dictionary. It is really dreadful. Now don't think I know any German. I once knew a very little, thirteen years ago, but it's all gone! It took me *ever* so long to read the letter you wrote, and then I had to hunt up every

word in the Dictionary. You trusted to your memory—I went painfully to the authorities, and discovered quite a nest of *shocking* mistakes, as a German philologist might find mistakes in a Scotchman's grammar, but the Scotchman knows English better than he does all the same.

Carbeth, June 1888.—Miss Mary H—— is to be married to-day in London to a Mr. L—— of Bangkok, Siam. Mrs. Wilson sent off a telegram to him, 'The sun is shining upon you and Mary to-day.—CARBETH.' Dad objected to that, and his father wanted, 'Our united best wishes and congratulations.' But I stood out for Mrs. Wilson's way. Dad said he was ashamed to write out a mere statement of the weather.

Wednesday, June 20, 1888.—Finished Deuteronomy: three years at the Pentateuch. It is, indeed, very solemn. I told my people I had often failed, no doubt, to tell them fully of God's love, but it had been laid before them. They had had Moses and the prophets, and if they would not believe them, they would not believe although one rose from the dead.

Wednesday, 8.8.1888.—Dear addlep*ate*, what a lot of 8.'s. Of course the Egyptian woman is the one with the pitcher on her head—make her very palpably blind of an eye. I think in drawing the Pyramids you should draw a little sketch about two or three inches in size to show the full shape, and then the corner of one to show the size of the steps, which would fill a whole page. And remember—just one Arab. Can't afford two Arabs for a ½d.[1]

I hope when you are abroad you will set a good example on the Sabbath days, and let no rain or weariness keep you from church, and no music lure you to a Romish one. If religion and principle mean anything one must be staunch. If there is no other Protestant church, go to the native

[1] *The Morning Watch* cost one halfpenny.

Protestant church. You will be able to pray with them. And if you are in a strange land, and can find a weekly prayer-meeting, go, like a good lass, and help to kindle a fire wherever God puts you. One hour of prayer with God's people will sweeten your sojourn in any place very wonderfully—better even than seeing a Rubens. And, as long as there are Foreign Missions that need every penny we can give, I wouldn't pay one to see the inside of the grandest Romish cathedral in the world. I hope you are not angry with me for saying this.

Sabbath, Sept. 2.—I enjoyed to-day very much. Nehemiah x. I spoke of personal covenanting, and read two covenants made by Cameronians more than two hundred years ago, very touching and beautiful, one of them by a woman called Jean Stiel. In the afternoon I spoke about the five kings who were shut up in a cave while the Israelites were pursuing the rest of the host. Josh. x. 18. Spoke of different classes of people 'reserved in darkness,' who had a fearful looking for of judgment. It gave us a lesson also how to deal with certain difficulties in Providence in the Bible—passages we can't explain, unfinished bits of our lives, things that were still in the cave of the future. I said we should leave them to attend to more pressing work. Some of us won't do anything till certain prayers are answered. God says, 'We 'll come back on that; follow on just now and do other work.'

Sept. 1888.—*Forenoon.*—The three chief points in the covenant the Jews made were—godly marriages, keeping the Sabbath, paying the tithes. I talked as honestly as I could. I never spoke before about giving. My congregation has no rich people in it, but they all give well. *Afternoon.*—John xii. 16—The disciples remembering how they had honoured Christ when He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit sometimes brings to our remembrance the things we have done for Christ as well as those we have done against Him; yet after all what we need to remember most is what God has done

for us, not in us or by us. I went to the House of Refuge at five, having taken tea with one of my elders. Then went to hear Mr. Watson of Liverpool in Dr. Bonar's church. He was the last minister Matthew Arnold heard. A fine sermon on saving life and losing life. I was very glad I heard him.

One of my people died last night—a godly woman, a Mrs. Dick. On Friday she asked if it was wrong to ask God to take her away, and then she said, 'Not my will,' etc. I had a nice chat with her, and when I was going away she kissed my hand—the only person who ever did that. It pleased me very much. I saw her again on Saturday morning, although she had told me not to come on Saturday, but she could not speak.

I spoke chiefly on 'make your calling and election sure' —a blessed contradiction—the idea of making *election* sure, when the election was made from all eternity! I spoke plainly on the difficulties of election; said it was above reason and, one would say, contrary to reason, yet God said it, and He is holy, and we must believe and trust Him. Forenoon and afternoon I tried to make the way of salvation as plain as possible. In this month's *Century* there is a most interesting story of the escape of a number of Federal officers during the war. The end is very striking. A Colonel Rose persevered and persevered, and dug a tunnel with a chisel, a comrade standing at the far end fanning in air. The last night, when Rose thought he was outside the prison limit, he dug up, and then began to faint, turned on his back, and in his despair, for he was choking, he struck up with his hands, broke through the crust and saw a star! and heard the sentinel's voice—'Half-past one and all 's well.' I closed in the afternoon by telling that, and said if we only stretched out our hands to God there was the bright and morning star above us.

Isn't it absurd dedicating a church to St. Mary the

Virgin? You might as well dedicate one to St. Paul previous to his second visit to Jerusalem. Mary the Virgin was not a better woman than Mary the wife of Joseph. There 's no such being as Mary the Virgin now.

It is odd Peter should have spoken about courtesy—the man who spoke so rudely to the maid-servant who said she had seen him with Christ.

My text: 'His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood.' It was suggested to me by a lad in our church to whom I give some lessons as often as I can in Latin and Greek. He said he thought the words, 'Ye have not resisted unto blood,' referred to that. A drunkard fighting against his sin tells you he resisted till the sweat was pouring off him. The Bible says, 'Ye have not resisted unto *blood.*'

My Bible class did a very nice thing. In the area of our church downstairs there are ten seats just in the centre, and thirteen at the side. In the front three or four nobody will sit. They creak, and are most uncomfortable. I have often asked my people to sit in them, but they will go anywhere else rather than do so. It gives the church an empty look, although otherwise well filled. I said to my Bible class I was accustomed to it myself now, but it was depressing to a stranger, and I would like if one or two of them would sit in them on Sabbath to cheer the strange minister. They *all* went and filled the seats, and it looked splendid. I count that better than a gold watch with Albert chain.

Ps. cix., which Dr. Watts sinfully calls the 'cursing Psalm.' David was a most generous man to his foes. Just as Ps. cx. refers to Christ, so Ps. cix. refers to His enemies. The Psalm was written for Judas' sake, perhaps for his sake only. Peter quotes it about him, and it is just like what God would do—put in a whole psalm to warn the

worst of men. 'Let his prayer be a sin,' even as it was with the foolish virgins. They cry, 'Open, open,' but they don't say, 'No light had we—for that we do repent.' That is not in the Bible.

'Have fervent charity.' We really ought to *love* people. It 's the most positive command in the Bible. It 's the very essence of God's nature.

'One day is with the Lord as one thousand years, and one thousand years as one day'—the first with respect to His power, the second as to His patience.

Oct. 14, 1888.—We had a baptism to-day—a boy—name, Douglas Young. I reminded the parents of the story of Sir James Douglas and the Bruce's heart—'Douglas will follow thee'; and said they were to teach their boy to follow Christ.[1]

I could have left by an earlier train, but I am glad I didn't. I had a great many opportunities of speaking to people and praying with them. I always pray very briefly where I visit.

Oct. 20, 1888.—We heard a great cry on the Esplanade, and saw people running to the water. I rushed downstairs, took my palm-tree stick, and ran out. From the sound I heard I feared it was a case of drowning, wondered what I would do, but when I got to the place I saw Capt. Williamson of the *Ivanhoe* in the water, and a girl in his arms. I cried out to him was he touching bottom, and he said 'No.' He was close to the slip, and I feared he was exhausted. I lay down all my length, and he got hold of the

[1] When these words were in the hands of the printer news came to his friends that Douglas Young, who had joined H.M.'s Forces in August 1914, had died in Flanders. He had been eleven days in the trenches, from which he had written in the happy expectancy of being 'at home' at New Year time, when he was seized by illness, to which he succumbed before he could be taken to a base hospital, dying on Jan. 13, 1918, aged twenty-nine.

end of my stick. The wee lassie was all right. The Captain and his wife just happened happily to be passing at the time. I determined to practise swimming more. A thing of that sort shakes one's nerves terribly. I felt queer all night.

Oct. 27, 1888.—On my way home from the Exhibition I saw an elderly man, his wife and daughter, a girl about seventeen, halt opposite a public-house in Dumbarton Road. The wife went across the street to a baker's shop, and the other two waited. I felt sure they would all go into the public-house. I went on, and then my heart smote me, and I went back. Presently the wife returned, and they made to go in. Just as the man was on the threshold, I stopped him, and begged him not to go in. He looked rather surprised, but not ill-pleased, and the three turned and went on. I saw another man going in, a bad-looking stick, and a girl about eleven. I said to him, 'Don't take your lassie in there.' He looked mighty surly, but went in all the same. I often wonder how far one ought to go in speaking to people. I have tried it, but not always with success.

Sabbath, Nov. 11, 1888.—The bells will stop ringing directly, and poor me is shunted aside.[1] There is a Mr. Stewart, a young minister, a nice fellow, preaching for me to-day. He is staying with one of my elders. There! the bells have stopped! I hope some of my people will be turned to God over whom I have had no influence. One has a queer feeling laid aside this way. It has shown me, I think, that my people like me. They have been very kind. Many have called regularly, and many more have called regularly on them to get the latest news. Mrs. Stewart has had a hard ten days of it—poultices every hour, night and day, for a week. I never had such a tedious attack, or one that left me so weak. Dr. Marshall is a splendid man. You would love him dearly.

[1] From an attack of quinsy.

When I wrote R. S. A., I told him he would have an opportunity of pitching into me for a blockhead, and so on. And yet I could not possibly have taken holidays. There are times when a man daren't stop till God actually tells him.

Nov. 14, 1888.—The doctor told me to go out for a little to-day. I meant to go to the prayer-meeting, but I didn't tell him that. However, after being out on the Esplanade for eight minutes or so I felt so weak that I have written off to one of my elders to arrange for the elders conducting it. I have not been out of the house for a fortnight, and feel I 'm not well enough yet. My tonsils are still inflamed.

I had a very melancholy warning to-night as to my duty. There was a lad who enlisted a long time ago—a quiet, sober, well-doing lad. He came home again, and attended church and prayer-meeting regularly, but I noticed latterly he was often only once at church. I often spoke with him *in my mind.* It 's odd that it is not easy noticing who are in church, and who are not. One fancies a seat is full as usual, and this lad's people sit in a seat I have least command of. I have been anxious to visit them for some time, and had them in view when I refused to go to H. Well, I went up to-night, and found he had left home eight weeks ago! He went away without telling them. They got word from him after a while. I 'm dreadfully sorry, for there is no doubt I 'm to blame for not looking after him better. The mother says she feels Richard will come back. After he went, she came down and walked past my house twice, but did not like to come in. She looked at the text in the *Watch* for that day. It was ' Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.' I hope I have not been altogether unfaithful as a minister. I have often worked beyond my strength, and yet—I have been an unprofitable servant. I am greatly vexed about that boy.

I can't get over the idea that you are a poetess ! ! How

do you look when you are courting the Muses? Do you get your rhymes first and then your thoughts, or your thoughts and then your rhymes? Do you bite the end of your pen—or is it a pencil? I 'm very glad there is something of your own in the first volume.

G. said he thought there was too much about Renwick; but poor Renwick deserves all the honour we can give him. He had no lass, or if he had he never got marrying her, and it is a dreadful thing never to have loved. Love is a new world to one. You won't find his name either in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* or in *Chambers's*, but you 'll find long yarns about obscure Romanists, and I 'm not sorry he has got five columns in the *Watch*.

We had a nice meeting to-night, although it was stormy and wet. Joshua bidding the two and a half tribes 'Good-bye'—a very sad story—type of people who fight for God, and who love God and wish their children to be good, but who can't give up the world. They follow Christ afar off with consequences that are speedily disastrous.

Ezek. xxxiii. 11: 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' I enjoyed the text. Isn't it wonderful—the Eternal taking His oath before you and me? This verse answers all difficulties about election. His wish for our salvation is as certain as His existence—as certain as any of His attributes. I kept them from 2.15 to 4.5, and was sorry, but I couldn't be shorter. I honestly wanted them all to turn to God.

Dec. 27, 1888.—'Thou shalt not forswear thyself.' 'Swear not at all.' I spoke about swearing, and urged them by loving God and cultivating their minds and their eyes to make conversation so interesting that it will have no need of oaths to give it an 'offset.' *Afternoon.*—I read Amos v., speaking of two or three things in the chapter, but longest on—'Woe unto you that desire the day of the

Lord. What is it unto you ?' People look for a good time coming—for a New Year—a great day—but it won't be a good time to them. The new year will just be an old year. We must be on God's side to enjoy God's pleasures. Then my text was Ps. lxxxviii.—'The land of forgetfulness.' A right name for the grave, and yet a wrong name. Look at dear F. Is she not very lovingly and sweetly remembered even here ? And what a crowd of friends, and what a sight of Christ, she has in glory ! 'Lord, remember me.' Why, it is *this* world that is the land of forgetfulness. At the end I spoke of two lands of forgetfulness. The bad place—'Depart, I never knew you' ; and the land of God's forgetfulness of *sin*—'The goat shall bear their iniquity into the wilderness, into a land that no man inhabiteth.'

Feb. 17, 1889.—I think this has been one of the happiest Sabbaths I have had for a long time. Ps. cxxx.—'Lord, from the depths to thee I cried.' A glorious Psalm ! Then Matt. vii., especially the bit—'Ask, and ye shall receive, for to *every one* that asketh it shall be given.' I enjoyed speaking about that very much. Afternoon text—'Let us make three tabernacles—this he said, not knowing what he said.' Peter forgot the people who were waiting everywhere for Christ—was quite at rest because he himself was happy—didn't understand the glory of the redeemed. He would build huts for glorified saints who were free from pain and cold and sorrow—saints who had left the many mansions for a little. He would separate them the one from the other, and both from Christ, and all from his comrades and himself, forgetting that they had come for fellowship. He did not know that Calvary was more glorious than Hermon, and the grave better than any tabernacle. He did not know he himself was to preach the Gospel and be crucified—all that before him, and he would willingly have stayed where he was. Peter was always blundering, and yet his blunders were evidence of his love. Then three babies were baptized. I told parents to let their children go to the front of the gallery, so we had

a grand ring of them right round. Mr. M'Crea's twins were baptized first. Mary has a little cough and cried somewhat —stared up at me; the other never wakened. I put on *very* little water. I spoke about their names, and said they were three frail little tabernacles—one for God—two for God—all for God, temples of the Holy Ghost. To the people I spoke one sentence saying these three little ones were three that bare record on earth of God's love toward sinners. At the close we sang Ps. xlv.—'The daughter of the King.' After dinner I called on two people who were ill. Then went to the Industrial School—136 boys. They were extremely attentive, and I was dreadfully pleased at being asked to go and speak to them. It has been a very happy day.

Feb. 1889.—My text, Acts xvi.—'The Spirit of Jesus suffered them not to go into Bithynia.' If God blocks our way when we seek His glory it 's not done to show His power; it 's the Spirit of Jesus the Elder Brother, the Spirit who guided Him on earth, and He sends the Spirit to lead us here. Jesus had something better for Paul. He closed Bithynia, but opened *Europe.*

March 1889.—The son of a godly Whithorn woman went to America to push his way—very unsuccessfully at first. When going about Chicago disconsolate, with his constant companion, a little terrier, a gentleman stopped him and said, 'Will you sell me that dog? It 's a countryman of mine.' 'It 's a countryman of my own,' said the lad. 'Indeed, where do you come from?' 'Whithorn.' 'Dear me, I come from Sorbie,' which is four miles from Whithorn. They fell a-chatting, and the lad told of his difficulties. The gentleman called next day—offered him a berth in his office, where he now is.

April 1889.—Twelve young communicants at this time. The most I ever had. My mother is very pleased. I had said previously we might have two; she thought there

would be four ; it was always that way I spoke. Which is a tribute to the total absence of exaggeration in my statements !

May, 1889.—' A bone of Him shall not be broken.' Why was God so particular about that ? I never preached on that subject before, and one can only guess at some of the reasons. It was not to save Christ pain or indignity while He lived, but God would not let Him be dishonoured when His work was done. Breaking the legs might have stunned Him and lessened pain, and He had to bear to the utmost. The spear thrust—will that be visible for ever and ever ? ' A Lamb as it had been slain.' When the Jews ate the Paschal lamb, the fact that its bones were not to be broken would make them wonder and eat deliberately, and after the flesh was eaten the bones lying whole would keep them in remembrance that it was the Paschal lamb they had been eating. Even after they had eaten it was visibly a lamb. So we must never forget, but bear about with us always the dying of the Lord Jesus.

Attending Meeting of Presbytery, May 14.—On my way I noticed a man coming out of a public-house, and felt vexed. I delayed a moment, and he came up to me and said I was Mr. S., he once was a Cameronian, and would have liked me for his spiritual adviser. I begged him to go home, and took his address, and I 'll write to him. He was a good deal the worse of drink, and kept me five minutes repeating Scripture with great fluency. We had a very, very happy meeting to-night. Dr. Mathews, the Secretary of the General Presbyterian Alliance, spoke beautifully, and said one of the earliest and most solemn memories of his life was family worship as conducted by an old Cameronian, in whose house he visited when he was four or five years old. He seemed still to hear the tones of his pleading voice. Our Moderator's prayers have been singularly touching. His health is not good, and the doctor has ordered him rest for a time.

May, 1889.—Got a letter to-day about Kate Mullen. I 've told you about her, an inmate in the House of Refuge. Had been one hundred times in jail. Last week she said, 'It won't be one glass or two, but mutchkins when I get out.' Her story was—a man in Belfast had led her astray, and she had a son. He was in an Industrial School in Glasgow, and she wished to go and find him out and smash every window in the place if they wouldn't let her see him. Mrs. C. promised to make inquiries about the lad for her. Last Thursday evening I read a sad story to the women (*Chronicles of Glenbuckie*) of a girl led astray, and her baby died, and a decent man asked her in marriage, and she agreed to give him an answer that day six months, and that day she died. She said, 'It was a solemn tryst, and my answer is "Good-bye."' Kate was there, listening, very quietly for her, and to-day I got a letter saying her boy died *last Thursday* in the City Poorhouse. He had been ill for months, and evidently didn't want to see his mother. Poor Kate!

Sabbath evening.—I was very happy to-day. Paid a visit after church, took tea with an elder. House of Refuge at six. Talked to the women very seriously on—'Hell is moved to meet thee at thy coming.' Told them with what anxiety angels and devils watched them when they left the Home, and entreated them to do something to show that the common notion of the impossibility of a woman's reformation is quite wrong. I never spoke so plainly to them before, but we know each other well enough now.[1] There are two girls in the Home who ran away from Quarrier's Homes on the Queen's visit—both sixteen years old. One was picked up in an entry four days after. She has been here ever since. The other has been very ill. When I got home I had been 10¼ hours away. In the forenoon I had spoken about Christ telling the disciples to have no purse, nor gold, etc., *i.e.* evidently a

[1] Shortly after coming to Greenock J. P. S. was appointed Hon. Chaplain to the House of Refuge, and continued to be until his death.

minister should never talk about salary, take what is given and throw himself on God—therefore a minister's wife is quite safe however poor her husband is. Isn't that a fine text—'Your peace shall return unto you'? If we fail in doing good, we get all we tried to give the other.

May 18, 1889.—My text to-morrow is—'In the place where He was crucified was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb.' The cross and the grave of victory quite close to each other, the place of humiliation and the place of exaltation visible at the same time. From the cross Christ could see the grave, from the grave He could see the cross. So our honour comes just in the line of our trials.

May 1889.—Yesterday a Mr. S. asked me to come and see the famous Bothwell Bridge Bloody Banner of the Covenanters. It came to him by inheritance. He had it in his hall between two sheets of plate glass—oak frame. It has 'Jehovah Nissi' in Hebrew on it, and 'For Christ's Covenant and Truth'; also, at the foot, in red letters, 'No quarters for ye active enimies of ye Covenant.' It is being sent to the Exhibition in connection with the bi-centenary of the Cameronian Regiment. To-day, after service I thought I would call on a young fellow who was not in church, made another visit on the spur of the moment, and on the way home made up on Mr. Jerdan, who had also been detained. He asked my texts and told me his. Said he had given an address to the children on the words 'Jehovah Nissi,' and he had told them of the Bloody Banner, which he had described to them, saying it was now in Dunbar. 'Dunbar!' I said. 'It 's in Glen Street.' I 'm going to take him this week to see it.

1889, *July* 4 (*Fair Week*).—W. asked me to stay on the yacht overnight, but I won't, although I would like to. I must go to the House of Refuge. The women are always restless at this time, and I 'm going to read *Little Lord Fauntleroy* to them. They like it. And I 've authorised

the matron to give them a good tea on the green at my expense. It 's always a trying week for them.

Yesterday I spoke of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews' great holiday. It came only four days after the great Day of Atonement, when the scapegoat was let loose, and the High Priest went within the vail. I spoke about holidays —our right to them, and the way we should keep them.

Sabbath, Sept. 1, 1889.—I enjoyed to-day greatly. Was very tired when I rose. In the morning I spoke about the parable of the tares, and in the afternoon—' He was known in the breaking of bread.' These disciples had walked with Christ eight miles, and didn't know Him. His glory was veiled, but He had not disguised Himself; their ignorance and folly were to blame. He was the guest, yet He took the host's place. His majesty must have impressed them. So Christ comes to us as our Master. The devil wants us to be free, or give Him but a little. Christ claims all we have. Christ's joy must have specially struck them. It was His first breaking of bread since the Supper. How much He had to bless God for! What a wonderful blessing it must have been! (You must ask Cleopas to repeat it to you—and to me.) Communion with God transfigured Him. Yet we speak of prayer as our last resort. We say, ' We 'll just have to pray '; and prayer—intercession—is glorification.

Another Sabbath well on—I was very happy to-day. I like the first chapter of Matthew very much. Is it not wonderful that he who was no genius should have been chosen to begin the second volume of God's Word? Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, one of the greatest of men, and yet one would rather have written Matthew's Gospel than the Pentateuch. Yet, of course, each in its own way was God's work. Isn't it bonnie that poor Uriah's name occurs in the Genealogy of Christ? I 'm very sorry for him—one who had been a heathen and came to trust under the shadow of God's

wing, and married one whom he thought to be a godly lass, and he was so brave and true; and David stole her from him. Her son Nathan, not Solomon (see Luke's Genealogy, which is the line of actual descent—Matthew's the legal succession), became Christ's ancestor; and Uriah's name comes in, for Bathsheba was his, and all Bathsheba's was his, and so Christ was his. I love Joseph and Mary more than ever. It was Joseph who gave Christ His name 'Jesus.' Mary was really Joseph's—'Fear not to take Mary *thy wife.*' Once they were espoused—engaged—they became in God's sight *one.*

Called on an old woman, who drinks badly, last night, and she asked why I never asked her about her ground of hope for eternity—was that like a minister? You should hear how she does miscall me!

I 'm glad I have the *Watch* to do. It gives me a lot of work, but it keeps me from idling a moment, and it may be one is doing good somewhere. The next world will declare it.

I really have had a busy week. Yesterday I walked thirteen miles. Tramped to the most distant part of the town in the evening on my way to the House of Refuge, to visit two old couples, and got pitched into for not calling oftener. I really do think a minister is not thought much of who does not take five weeks' holiday.

Nov. 1889.—Dined at the S.'s to-night to meet two missionaries. I sat beside a Mr. Gilmour from China, and, comparing notes, found he had spoken to me in the little church in Pekin!

Sabbath, Nov. 1889.—Forenoon subject—The people casting their sick down at Christ's feet. Some doubtless glad to get rid of their unpleasant burden. We often pray like that, glad to be done with it. And others determined from love to get the blessing. Christ must not stir one

step until they are healed. In the afternoon I took Job's wife—'Curse God and die,' and his answer. We had a discussion at L—— about her, and Mrs. G. said she was a bad woman. I said 'No.' Satan said God had put a hedge round about Job and his household and all he had. If he had had a bad wife, then there would have been a considerable gap in the hedge. The character of the children and Job's kindness to the poor, and God blessing her afterwards with ten children, all show she was good. Satan said, 'He will curse Thee.' Job blessed Him, and, though he didn't know it, he completely vindicated the Divine Glory. Satan is not heard of again in the book. He disappears, but the poor woman who had for a moment done his work repents and shares the blessing in the end.

CHAPTER IX

LETTERS FROM GREENOCK

1888–1893

'At ten, a child;
At twenty, wild;
At thirty, strong if ever;
At forty, best;
At fifty, west;
At sixty, wise, or never.'

—OLD RHYME.

To Mr. R. S. Allan

Jan. 28, 1888.

MY DEAR BOB,— . . . I told you about the little chap that was drowned at sea. Last evening his mother gave me a Java box (full of other boxes) which the small boy had asked her to buy for me. 'Won't the minister get a big fright when he opens it?' he had said to her. He was four and a half years old. He was always in church before he went away; about the last sermon he heard was on Peter (his own name), and he whispered, 'Mother, the minister is speaking about me.' His mother's father, grandfather, two uncles, and a brother-in-law were all lost at sea. . . .

To the Rev. James Denney

GREENOCK, *Nov.* 23, 1888.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Your letter was one of the pleasantest incidents of my illness. Of course there was no danger, but quinsy is a sore thing and an exhausting, and this time, thanks to the weakening of my constitution by many and long-continued, unbroken, and arduous labours, it has been unusually tedious. I 'm getting up my strength nicely now, though I notice the hills are all steeper than they were

a month ago. I preached with all my wonted vigour last Sabbath, and was none the worse. (You will notice how newspaperish my style has become—result of lying in bed and getting the *Herald* brought to me.)

I 'm sure you will like Joshua. I, too, was at a loss about a book to lecture on, but fixed on Matthew—thought a gospel would not be out of place. Had Mark six years ago. Am a little disquieted, however, by what Dr. Whyte says—'The best ministers are great in Paul's Epistles'; but it is easier to doubt Dr. Whyte than resign my own position. How 's Isaiah getting on?[1] Wish it had been an original commentary.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

P.S.—Here is one of Grant's sayings. S., the missionary, said if he could just have got at M. the day of the School row! it wasn't grace that kept him back. 'It was space,' said Grant. 'Yes,' said S., 'it was space and nothing else.' 'Ah well,' said Grant, 'space is also a form of the infinite.'

To Mr. R. S. Allan

MY DEAR BOB,—Delighted for once to have a thoroughly illogical letter from you. What does a doctor know about theology? I wish you knew *my* doctor here, Dr. Marshall. He is one of the best in town, and if he is anything he is a theologian. And so ought to be every man, woman, and child. There are some points folks may not have an opinion on, but a great many things on which they should have one. There are daily recurring difficulties one doesn't need to call in an expert for. I 've had quinsy seven or eight times, and am bound to have learned something about it if I am not a fool, and a man can scarcely be quite that who has corresponded with you for thirteen or fourteen years. As a matter of fact I was right last week and the doctor was wrong, simply because his vision was hardly as commanding as my feeling. But don't be afraid—I am too timid not to have great faith in doctors. I have had a worse swollen

[1] A translation by Mr. Denney of Prof. Franz Delitzsch's *Commentary on Isaiah*.

throat, but I never had such a tedious one, and it has given me a good shake. My system (as you solemnly warned me weeks ago) must have been in bad order, and I have had to take holidays with a vengeance. I have had any amount of visitors, judicious and otherwise. My congregation specially have been very kind. . . .

I think one of the greatest trials a person could have would be constant change of domestics. I would like to have them marry in my house—it may be one whose vocation it was to be single, staying on for fifty-seven years. . . .

To the Rev. Charles Jerdan

MY DEAR MR. JERDAN,—I stupidly forgot, and you courteously forbore to ask, the enclosed. It is not too late, I hope.

I 'm all right now, though I don't mean to go out for a few days. How is Mrs. Jerdan ? Toothache gone ? See how sympathetic and humble suffering has made me.

Farewell salicylic tabloids ! Farewell quinine ! Farewell companies of enquiring ministers ! Welcome daily tasks ! Welcome public meetings ! Welcome sweet soirees !—Sic subscribitur, JAMES RENWICK.

To the Rev. James Denney.

Dec. 31, 1889.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Every good wish for Mrs. Denney and yourself for the coming year and for ever.

Please don't bother acknowledging the *Watch*. I 'll see you some day face to face.

This is a busy week with meetings and what not. You have seen a miserable tug in mid-ocean towing derelicts and mail steamers, her bunkers empty (theirs full, but no means of transhipping coal), her oil gone, the billows sweeping her decks, wind roaring from every point of the compass.

Or you may have seen (the one is as likely as the other) serfs, not making bricks, but building pyramids, without straw, or clay, or anything.

Well, that 's me.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

GREENOCK, *Feb.* 26, 1890.

MY DEAR DENNEY,— . . . I hope you are kindling a fire and doing some mighty forgings for the world, but a spark or two from your anvil would be a great illumination to the poor *Watch*. That is a good metaphor. Only tell me which lesson you would do.[1] On no account are you to do it if you feel disinclined, or if you are too busy. Only, if you see a man hammering away making a bad nail with great difficulty, it is cruel to stand by if you have a rare good one in your pocket that you don't need. Another good metaphor! I think the genius of poetry must have thrown her mantle over me unawares when passing through Ayrshire. Was at Whithorn on Sabbath—left this on Saturday at 4.25 A.M., left Whithorn on Monday at 3.30, and got to Glasgow at 11.55 P.M. Very tipsy man was bundled into our carriage at Ayr. After a little he handed me his whisky bottle, almost full. I said it would be better to empty it, and opened the window. After waiting a little, let it all run out, and then sent the bottle against a dyke opportunely revealed by the light of a waxing moon (see astronomical tables for February). Then I shut the window, and the man, who had said nothing (big, strong fellow) all this time, after a little bent forward, and said, 'Now, if I had done that to anything belonging to you, would you not have said I was rude?' That was all that passed between us—and he fell asleep. . . . Written in haste but quite coolly and collectedly.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

1890.

. . . Do you ever tell stories in your sermons? Apropos of young people joining the church, I told my folks at the Communion about the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh. When

[1] For the early numbers of the *Morning Watch* J. P. S. was promised by his friends Denney and Grant occasional help in the preparation of notes on the International Sabbath School Bible Lessons. When these notes were discontinued, their help ceased.

the Punjab became the Queen's, the Koh-i-noor came with it. The Maharajah visited the Queen at Buckingham Palace when he was grown up, nineteen or twenty years after. The Koh-i-noor had been re-cut. The Queen found out the Maharajah would like to see it. Sent for it to the Tower. Guard brought it. It was put in the M.'s hand. He went over to the window with it (remember the possession of the Koh-i-noor was supposed to involve the throne of the Punjab), stood a long time gazing at it—great anxiety—then he came forward, made obeisance, gave it back, saying, 'Madam, when I gave it up before I was a child, and did not know what I was doing. Now I give it up to you of my own accord and with all my heart.' Got that story in a big worthless book—*Life of Sir John Logan.* Only good thing in the book. Moral obvious! . . .

To the same

Aug. 18, 1890.

My dear Denney,—I never got a kinder letter, and I thank you with all my heart for it. What you say about Zacchæus is delightful and could not be improved. I wish it had been longer. Only three lessons to speak about this month, and that in itself would have made a longer exposition desirable!

I have interested myself a good deal—had to interest myself—in several drunkards for a good many years; have neglected my sermons, visitation, etc., all to help them; have called on them six times a week, often three times a day; have written letters; in season and out of season have declared the whole counsel of God; have wept and prayed with them; have heard them when they were sober entreat God to make them willing to be saved; have done more with them than touch the hem of His garment, I thought. Yet these last two months things were worse than ever.

Last week was full of trouble. I had promised weeks ago to one of my old companions to go to him on the 12th grouse-shooting—that is, looking on! But at the last moment I heard bad news of one of my people; wrote off

saying I couldn't come on the 12th. The rumours turned out to be exaggerated very much, so, being pressed, I agreed to go on Thursday ; set off with my bag, called at the house on the way, found a terrible state of things, and, being asked to stay, waited ten hours. I had two invitations for this week—a whole week—and I thought a holiday would do me good—and I can't go.

One can face one duty, but when God pulls a body two different ways ; when two accredited messages come, the saying, 'Eat no flesh nor drink water,' and the other, even more accredited and urgent one, saying, 'Tarry with me this night,' and there 's a lion in both directions and an angel with a drawn sword every way one's ass likes to look, what is one to do ? I know I 'm speaking foolishly, but both God and you understand me. Kindest regards to Mrs. Denney. Wish I had a day with you.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

1890.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Many thanks for the lessons. I 'm in bed with quinsy. I felt languid all week, and went to Rothesay yesterday to preach, and now am quite knocked up. I can neither sleep nor eat. I drink a little with great ado. Nor can I think, nor pray. It was a year to a day since I was ill before.

If you have any bonnie wee thought or famous simple utterance, or little-known pretty bit of poetry—even four lines—it would be a help to me for that weary *Watch*.

Last year I was five days in bed. Year before I had the doctor twenty-one days. I didn't think it was so hard to pray when one is ill.

I like Thess., but am very discursive. I fear Paul would have a bad three-quarters of an hour if he had to listen to me.—Yours ever, J. P. S.

To the same

Oct. 22, 1890.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—I needn't try to say what I think about your wife's kindness, but it shows how little Paul

was helped compared with me by womankind. *I* wouldn't say what he said of them—'by way of permission'—'The unmarried woman careth,' etc. Had that been his fad, and was he allowed to indulge it as a little bit of concession? I shall use all that Mrs. Denney sent—some of it in this number, the rest in the next, which must be printed at once. I didn't see the last proof sheets, having to leave them to the printer's judgment, which I would not have done if I could have helped it.

The quinsy, which had attacked the right side latterly, so beat me that I fell asleep on Sabbath night; when I awoke the swelling was gone, and I was preparing a great national act of rejoicing when I discovered I could not move my left leg! Rheumatism had looked in at the open window, and, seeing the owner asleep, stepped in. So now I have a worse foe. It is with difficulty I rise or sit down. This last I accomplish by lowering myself down the back and sides of an easy-chair—if you can imagine that feat. I rise by pure power of will, helped by two walking-sticks and the sympathetic groans of Mrs. Stewart. If I wish to move my leg I use the other leg as a fulcrum and a staff as a lever—an idea which I am amazed at Archimedes not discovering. What with the *Watch*, visitors, etc., I have had a week of it.

Oct. 29.

My rheumatism went away gradually, but has left me very weak. On Friday last week I was *done*. Slept most of the day. Like a madman I preached on Sabbath, but it did me no harm. I have only visited one or two very sick people this week. I have to preach at Loanhead on Friday and baptize a minister's baby. The change will do me good and the service will be very short.

I had 1 Thess. iii. last Sabbath. I once heard a minister say that 'Satan hindered me' meant 'I was lazy or something of that sort,'—quite different from 'The Spirit suffered me not.' But I think that is wrong. Odd that Satan's hindering Paul from going to Thessalonica set Paul on to writing Epistles. Like all Satan's blunders.

I can't thank Mrs. Denney enough. I couldn't have had the wee magazine finished last month but for her. I enjoy the missionary selections very much. You have *both* been very kind to me.

Last Sabbath week my elders conducted a prayer-meeting and read a sermon—the afternoon one was one of Oswald Dykes', the forenoon Robertson's of Brighton. So we are getting on. Robertson was specially admired! There 's hope of us yet.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

52 ELDON ST., *Jan.* 1891.

MY DEAR DENNEY,— . . . Your lesson was delightful. You are sure of your place in the team. The church-going problem is a serious one. What do you mean to do? If folks won't come to hear *you*, their judgment must be about ripe.

I finish Matthew in two days, and would like to try an Epistle, but am afraid. Which would you recommend to a beginner? I did Peter once; but I have not had twelve texts out of Paul! And none of them were Pauline. And twelve years a minister! It would be enough to make Paul 'coot me dead,' as the P. M. said. Only, I fancy Paul would know (though with all humility) that the loss was mine. Yet surely saints in Heaven will be astonished to hear their names applied to systems of truth —as if the man who painted a rivet should find the Forth Bridge called after him. It would make him blush. . . .— Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

Sept. 28, 1891.

. . . I MET the G. A. Smiths from Aberdeen at the West Station one day and had twenty minutes' talk—a good deal of it about you. Mrs. Smith told me a lot about their travels. She said their dragoman had been ridiculing Cook's tourists—'They sat down to eat at the sound of a

horn, stopped at the sound of a horn, slept at the sound of a horn, etc.' 'Well,' I said, 'they had a good precedent, for the Israelites themselves did Jericho to the sound of a horn.' I should have said—'were personally conducted round Jericho.'

Texts yesterday—'Why stand we in jeopardy every hour?' And why don't *we* stand in jeopardy? Life is too easy, or rather, we try to take it easy—bless God we don't live in an age of persecution, and could be persecuted well enough if we cared to. Afternoon—'Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel.' We had our Communion two weeks ago; I was alone as usual. . . . Get as much done as you can before you are forty, for forty comes soon enough.

Remember me kindly to Mrs. Denney. I often speak of her kindness to me.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

. . . IT 'S a great grace to know when one is no longer wanted, and I hope I 'll have sense to retire at the fitting time if I live to see it, and if it hasn't already come. I 'll be a poor creature when I 'm fifty. But one very quickly gets out of touch with the rising generation.

To the same

Nov. 1891.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—The Sabbath School Lessons begin with Isaiah this year—a book which perhaps you may think you have done more than your duty to. Now, the *Watch* is still to continue its death-tick; will you help it to die gracefully? Here are the Lessons—five, you will see; so that your one must be a little shorter than the last, which was a delightful one. . . . Now, you are a great lion, and I am the little child and my switch is my pen. You will do the first, but if you had a weighty word on the third, or would prefer any other, do say. I am more than pleased to have you do one, but sometimes you might feel that you would like some other of the lessons better. . . .

I have ordered your book on Thessalonians for the earliest possible moment and am wearying to see it.

I like Delitzsch much better than I did at first. I see you and hear you in it. D. has got his waggon hitched to a star.[1]

G. and R. were at Buffalo Bill's last week. 3s. 6d. seats. Firstrate, they say. G. went to see if it was a place he could take his wife to. So you see that the man who considers his wife is twice blessed.

Chronicles at the prayer-meeting. We are once more into the ice-floes of proper names at the end. But I try to do my duty to them all, Happizzez and Romamti-ezer, and all. 'Ice' reminds me of a remark I saw yesterday about Roger, the first martyr to be burnt in Queen Mary's time—'He broke the ice valiantly!'

I like when you tell me your texts. I began 2 Cor. last Sabbath afternoon. 'In Him is the Yea.' Christ liked to say 'Yes.' I know that is only one side of the meaning, if it is a side.

A fine lad in my congregation has been made skipper of a tug-boat. Which has been a great lift to me.

Now, lion, let me see your footprints as soon as possible.

Remember me very kindly to Mrs. Denney. Tell her it's a great responsibility to be the wife of a man who has been so kind to— J. P. S.

To the same

Jan. 19, 1892.

My dear Denney,—I bury my mother to-day. She died on Saturday morning. She took influenza seven weeks ago, and seemed to get over it, but her heart was weak. My brother's wife died four weeks ago. I saw my mother last on Friday night, and did not expect her death. Her last words to me were: 'I often pray for the damned (this word was said with a wonderful inexpressible tenderness); I don't know whether it is a sin or not; but He has changed afore now.'

[1] Mr. Denney had recently completed the translation of Prof. Franz Delitzsch's work on the Prophecies of Isaiah.

She would have been eighty-six next May; she was married on her forty-fourth birthday, or the day after.

My father would read nothing by anybody he disapproved of; my mother read all Newman she could get hold of, etc. Once a lady sent me a heap of Swedenborgian books. My mother hid them and read them during the night, and told me afterwards she had burned them all as she was beginning to believe them. She was terribly full of fun, and was either making jokes or quoting Scripture, or doing both. Everything that happened suggested something in the Bible to her. She got over at the last almost dry-shod.

I am going through 2 Cor., and meant to ask you the meaning of 'as deceivers and yet true.' Does it mean 'falsely called deceivers'? or that 'I have always spoken truly and yet never told you the one-half of the glory'?

Remember me kindly to Mrs. Denney.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

May 6, 1892.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—It was a great letter you sent me, but it made me thirst for more. I must have half an hour's painful talk with you some day, when you will tell me the very worst that can be truthfully said against the Solemn League, etc., etc. . . .

A godly sailor in our congregation, first mate, who often delayed his own home-coming to look after his drinking comrades, has died, or been killed at sea. Cable this week. He was just what a godly officer ought to be. Was a member, but he had never been here at a Communion time, so that he never sat at the Lord's Table—taken to the reality at once.

Our social meeting last evening—as great a success as if we had all been ready for translation. (James Watt Hall and Museum.) Robertson, who was there, made a kindly soiree speech—lots of music—leisurely tea. I said twenty words, and then Grant conducted family worship

very touchingly, reading the 146th Psalm, then prayer, then the 121st Psalm, and last, the Blessing. We closed at one minute past eleven—the ending a very beautiful one. I wish you had been with us.

I began Genesis! So I obeyed you so far, leaving Paul for a little—at which I hope he will not be offended. I would honour him if I could.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

Grant was in rare spirits last evening. He made no speech, however, but poked fun at me continuously. We had violins, etc. He said, 'It 's a fine thing to have distinctive principles, for then you can go any length.' Said he 'could understand now how the Puritans in New England had ordination balls.'

To the same

Aug. 1892.

. . . WHAT ruts I myself must walk in! Keep us out of ruts—or to put it better, should not one say—'Anoint my head with fresh oil'? A young lad—referring to a question I had put about one of our members who swears at his work when in a passion—said, 'A minister doesn't know what his people are through the week. On Sabbath he sees them *as they would like to be.*' That cheered me as much as the other vexed me. It 's true about myself.

To the same

Aug. 8, 1892.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Your letter was a delightful one. Seeing you are willing—and comparatively able!—to do the other two lessons, I accept it always, and in all places, most noble Denney, with all thankfulness. I have often admired the way Tertullus is finished off in Acts, as if Luke, said—'etc., etc., you all know the kind of thing'; and it seemed as if Tertullus was going to have a verbatim report—the speech of the occasion.

To the same

Sept. 1892.

MY DEAR DENNEY,— . . . I had ten days' yachting —glorious. Never had such a time of freedom from care. Odd that the absence of letters should cheer one more than all Paul's Epistles. We were seven in all on board, five of them ladies, all young and clever and pleasant. The crew called me 'the old gentleman.' This funny coincidence happened with our chaperon, a young widow, just home from India. She added greatly to our happiness, and we used to chaff her a good deal. We had sailed up Loch Scavaig in Skye (Stanley's party photographing us as we rowed past them), landed, walked the seventy or eighty yards to Loch Coruisk. The chaperon was behind us; I, affecting to believe she was out of hearing, mentioned a plan to the others by which I was to beguile her up the loch a bit all alone, and then leaving her, run back quickly, and joining the others, get on board and leave her marooned. Just as she was expostulating with me on my cruel project, her own brother and seven yachtsmen appeared on the bank behind us! We did not know her brother was yachting in that part of the world at all! If that had been in a novel, it would have been voted too hollow a thing—*Deus ex machina* palpably. We went up Ben Nevis in drenching rain, and never saw more than two arm's length in front of us.

To the same

Nov. 1, 1892.

MY DEAR DENNEY,— . . . A great missionary meeting in Town Hall last Sabbath. Laws spoke well, Gibson splendidly. . . . One feels nothing but shame listening to them.

Have you ever thought how much money one should lay by? Or does the Bible forbid all thought on the matter? Grant says a man like me should on no account lay past more than £500, married or single. I presume that would apply to you, too, though your Church has a widows' fund.

Should one lay past more than should bury one, and pay a doctor, say for six weeks at 2s. 6d. a visit? I 'm in earnest and you must tell me: what 's the good of you if you can't answer a practical question? And what does Mrs. Denney say? What is faith? It would certainly be awful to open one's eyes in another world and find that one's money, which might have printed a Bible, fattened lawyers and destroyed one's own character, to say the least. Have you a theory? And does your life contradict your theory? Should one give all to God and run the risk of a triumphant, because inexplicable, entry into the poorhouse?—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

1892.

. . . HAVE you ever thought of the lawfulness of D.D.? M.A. seems presumptuous enough, only it has come to mean nothing. But D.D. still carries power with it. I sometimes wish that men like Geo. A. Smith and you and Stalker would rest content to be plain Mr. When every great man is D.D., to be not D.D. is a proclamation to the world of inferiority, and it must vex and harm old ministers. If some great ones were only Mr., Mr. would not be a term of reproach. You see I am preparing for old age already. And to get D.D. at one's jubilee is only doing what the Chinese do. But then you have a wife, and she 'll wish D.D. However, Paul was never capped, and he 'll have the laugh over you then.

To Mr. Alex. Murdoch [1]

GREENOCK, *March* 13, 1893.

MY DEAR MR. MURDOCH,—Your most kind letter I see is dated 16th January, but surely you have put January instead of February just to catch me delaying! It can't be two months since I got your brother's book! [2] A most

[1] Known to a generation of Glasgow students as Assistant Greek Professor, in the days of Professors Lushington, Jebb and Murray.

[2] John Murdoch, LL.D., went out to Ceylon to take up a Government educational appointment in 1844, but, having resigned

delightful one it is—as practical and interesting as a book could be. It reminds me in many ways of Lord Wolseley's *Soldier's Pocket Book*, which I often read. I shall return it safely to you when I have copied out some bits of it. I wish you would give me your brother's autograph—a formal note or postcard, if you can spare one—or a signature and date. I wish to make a collection of missionaries' autographs—to frame them and put them up in the hall of our new church—if it is ever built. I think it might rouse some of my young folks. And besides it is our duty to honour men who have done such noble work. I have Dr. Moffat's signature, and a great friend of Gilmour of Mongolia is sending me one of his—a letter. So I have made a good beginning. I would put a note or two under each, telling of the man's great work, or giving a famous saying of his. Perhaps I would put in their portraits also.

I think such a design justifies the having of the autograph fever, which I have had more and more ever since I was a lad. I lately asked a lady friend of Adams the astronomer to give me a tracing of his signature for the *Morning Watch*—not expecting more; and she sent my letter to Mrs. Adams, who sent me a whole letter, and one of Le Verrier's to him, and one of Herschel's and Dr. Whewell's and de Morgan's! A Greenock timber man, of his own accord, and in spite of my protest against his parting with such a thing, gave me one of two letters he had from Nansen the explorer. I have also Joseph Thomson, the explorer, and Sir Leopold McClintock. . . . I got an autograph catalogue lately from Birmingham—very interesting. Greek and Latin scholars' autographs are about the cheapest. Dr. Kennedy, Thompson of Trinity, Jowett, Dr. Donaldson, Conington—all cost from 1s. 6d. to 2s. Dr. Livingstone's, Bishop Heber's—letters—a guinea. Cromwell's signature, £8. I half think of buying a Livingstone for my collection for the church.

it in 1849 from conscientious scruples, devoted the rest of his life to the writing, publishing, and disseminating of Christian literature throughout India.

Here is a good thing Grant said the other day. There is a slightly cantankerous minister who hardly speaks to any of his brethren. I—— is his only friend. 'But,' said a minister to him, 'I—— doesn't ostracise his brethren as you do.' 'No,' said the cantankerous one, 'but he would, if it were not for one thing and another.' 'Just so,' said Grant, '"one thing and another," that is, God's grace and his own common sense.'—I am, my dear Mr. Murdoch, yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. James Denney

. . . SABBATH last was our Communion day. We had twenty-one new communicants — very interesting, but very tiring work speaking to them. What texts do you take for a Sabbath after a Communion? I had a nice text eight days ago—'The cherubim's faces were toward the mercy-seat and toward one another.' Did you never wonder at the placing of the cherubim on the mercy-seat? All in one piece! I am glad you are writing the Temperance Tract. I have never forgotten Prof. Gairdner's way of putting it: 'One never knows what work God may ask one to do at any moment, and one should always be at one's best.' I am wearying to see what you write. It is a rare chance you are getting. Did you ever sit up with a drunkard, or spend a day watching one? I have often.

To the same

Oct. 1893.

. . . I THINK I 'll discontinue the International Sabbath School Lessons in the *Watch*. They are so grotesquely chosen, and one can't do justice to oneself, or them, in fifteen lines, and there are so many other papers that deal at length with them. So you have only one more to do—if I carry out this plan. But that is not to prevent you from having a column of the *Watch* at your disposal in every number, or in every leaf. There may be little things that you might otherwise toss over your garden wall, and

they would be a flower for me. Your sea-trip should add a new realm to the worlds you have already conquered.

Sermons infallibly returned within eight days. But I want others! Light! More Light!

To the same

Oct. 1893.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Your sermons have greatly touched and delighted and humbled me. Once or twice I thought I could have handed you one little brick, but the edifice! And I take it as a very remarkable proof of your goodness that you let me have them. I wish to make some extracts and go over them again, and then I shall return them, but only on condition I get a new supply. My intellectual and moral system will run down otherwise. They make the Bible a delightful book to me. . . .

We sat up till 1.30. G. gave us a bit of Parker, which he had learned from H. It was after Dr. Parker had had some disagreement with a number of office-bearers. 'To-day I complete my twenty-first year in London. Twenty-one years! They might have made an old man of me; but twenty-one years only make a man of a man. Yet I could not have borne them but for the love of my office-bearers, who held up my hands in all my enterprises, who not only seconded, but, in the old gracious sense of the word, prevented, all my best efforts, carrying me with them continually to the throne of grace, and moving the Hand that moves the universe to work for this poor worm that stands before you. I hope this vast audience understands the figure of speech that is called "IRONY!"' G. did it well—in a fine deep voice.

As to your course of lectures in America,[1] I would be a big man, indeed, if I could give you any advice. I would like you to survey the whole field, but I would like you also to dwell for a time at least on one of the excellent mounts,

[1] Mr. Denney had been invited to deliver a course of lectures in the following Spring to the students of Chicago Theological Seminary.

such as the Incarnation. Divinity lectures that are not meant to do men good are awful things, and I 've heard a lot of them. I somehow think the fire in your own heart will burn within you, and you won't feel happy till you have uttered your whole soul about the love of Christ. It 's a wonderful errand—an opportunity that an Apostle would have envied. What will Paul say when your angel goes and tells him ! He 'll be right glad ; and I 'm sure you will go in his spirit and power. You 'll have some Sabbaths there too. I hope you will make the very utmost of them, and you must speak, too, at prayer-meetings, however small. Some small boy will be there who will remember you in days to come.

To the same

Nov. 1893.

. . . I READ and re-read all your sermons with great delight, and found lots of things that make passages of Scripture very beautiful to me. That 's a fine brave bit about wives not forbidding their husbands to keep friendly with their old chums, and I congratulate you in having such a sensible wife that you could say it with all boldness and joy. The sermon on the Church's interference with trade disputes struck me. It was all new.

CHAPTER X

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER-DIARY

1890–1893

'In God's world, for those who are in earnest, there is no failure. No work truly done, no word earnestly spoken, no sacrifice freely made, was ever made in vain.'—F. W. ROBERTSON.

Jan. 1 (*Wednesday*).—I just took the chapter in ordinary course about Achish sending David back. The Philistines said—'What do these Hebrews here?' David had evidently so lost heart that he was quite prepared to fight against Israel, but though he had himself forgotten his past history and achievements, the Philistines remembered them. God's enemies wonder at us when we do wrong. We have sat at the Lord's Table and vanquished Satan. What do we sitting in the scorner's chair and doubting God?

If we had no bridescake we could give a fine dinner and tea with the money to the House of Refuge women. Wouldn't that be good? I hope when we marry bridescake will be unfashionable. Did you know that Moses was the first to call God 'My God.' Those who went before seem to have been afraid to go so near—even Abraham.

Passed three carters to-day with their horses and carts. Saw one of them with a wee, wee book in his hand. After I was four yards ahead I heard him read to his neighbour, 'Verily I say unto you, If any man hear My words.' Odd? and very bonnie?

The House of Refuge women gave me a cheer when I went in. They were very anxious to hear the story

Kidnapped, by Stevenson, finished; and I read fifty-nine pages and stopped at 10.10. And they are supposed to go to their rooms at 9.20 at the latest!

Feb. 9, 1890.—Rose at 5.40. A very happy day. Salome's request for her children in the morning. Afternoon—'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.' We think of Simeon as a white-haired old man with the child Jesus in his arms. We forget that that meeting was the end of a life of waiting, and it lasted only a few minutes, and it needed as much faith to believe that that poor child was the Lord's Christ as to believe that he, Simeon, was not to die before he saw Him. I wished to show that a Christian's life is faith to the very end—that old people have trials but also a peace with them that passeth knowledge. 'These all *died* in faith.'

The afternoon sermon—'This is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.' I liked the subject awfully. It was longer than usual, and I did not preach quietly, but the congregation seemed to like it and sang with great heart after it. Wasn't it a blunder about the inheritance—the Heir had actually come to make them joint-heirs with Himself?

After church I took dinner at one of my elder's, then went to the House of Refuge—there from 5.15 to 6.30. Then Mr. Jerdan's class—unusually large. The sixth commandment and Paul's imprisonment and death—Nero's character. In reading up for the class I discovered that the name of the slave who gave Nero his death-blow was Epaphroditus. Odd? Very different from Paul's Epaphroditus, who risked his own life for his master. Then as the class closes in two weeks, and Mr Jerdan said he would not trouble me again this year, I bade them 'goodbye' and asked them to fear God.

'After that He appeared unto James'—His own brother. He didn't appear to His mother, not because the bond was broken, for she must ever be His mother, but because she could not contain the glory He must have shown her.

Doubtless she saw Him with the rest, but I mean no special appearance—the full embrace is reserved for Heaven. He acknowledged the bond, the family tie, by seeing James, who did not then believe in Him. I wished to show that Christ as the God-Man, after His sufferings were ended, knew the sharpest of human suffering—a friend that was not saved. It must have been a strange interview.

March 23, 1890.—Dr. Macmillan congratulated me on the 'charming' notice of me in the papers. Said it was all true. Mrs. Stewart has a copy of the paper, but I haven't read it.

I had for my companion in the train the Free Gaelic minister. He said he had a nice thing to tell me—that one of his young communicants, a girl, told him it was my preaching in his church three months ago that had led her to Christ. Which would be glorious news—if one were sure it was true. A bride for Christ! I have had almost nothing of that kind told me. I have been much disappointed as a minister.

Two funerals to-day. Mr. P.'s at three. His four masters were all there, and the men under him carried his coffin in relays—they asked to do it. I liked that. We sang a bit of the 23rd Psalm. Then a poor girl's, Katie Rutherford, aged eleven, who was in our Sabbath school. Parents dead, lived with ill-doing grandparents. Her funeral was fixed for the same hour and had to be altered. Her grandfather and brother and I were the only mourners. The boy sells ½d. papers. Makes 1½d. off every dozen he sells. He was in great distress about his sister's death.

A running stream has always something touching about it. 'By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept.' Is it that we can sit and look without being wondered at, and speak without being heard? Or do we feel that the running water is like our own past, and the sea to which it flows like our own unknown but vast and troubled future? Or does the water seem happy to cheer us?

Sept. 1, 1890.—On Sabbath I begin 1 Thess. It really is

time I was doing something for Paul. Yet truly his reign is not ended with me, for I have tried to exalt him and teach my people what he says, though I didn't take many texts out of his books.

Dec. 20, 1890.—I had a nice subject on Sabbath—the woman with eighteen years' infirmity. I said she had a history: (1) eighteen years' trouble, (2) eighteen years' grace, (3) nineteen centuries of honour, (4) an eternity of glory. 'Ought not this woman—?'—it was necessary. God had her in His purpose from everlasting, and this glory before her.

Sab., Feb. 1, 1891.—'Man shall not see My face and live.' I spoke of the glory of God. Even all that astronomers see is but the hem of His garment, and His love is greater even than His power—at least grander. How Christ must have humbled Himself! Men looked on His face. The men of Nazareth saw nothing in it. He wept—and stranger still, He slept—and people perishing! A *real* man. Judas kissed His face, and the Jews spat on it. He was humbled more and more. The first words are His, 'Let there be light,' and yet He died in darkness. Dying, God seemed to take from Him every attribute. He actually cried, '*Why* hast Thou forsaken me?' though He spent eternity in preparing for that hour. Nothing was left but perfect holiness. How degrading sin is when it makes us incapable of seeing the face of God and capable of spitting on the face of Christ.

There was a man at Dumfries who had been drinking, seeing his brother off in the train. Both pretty bad. The one at the door spoke about my glasses and talked—asked if I was a mathematician—what was one-third of one-half? I said one-sixth. 'Well,' he said, 'you are a mathematician or a minister.' His brother said, 'He 's no a minister. That 's no a minister's hat.' The one at the door pressed me repeatedly to say if I was a minister. I was a teetotaller evidently, but he would meet me again.

Yesterday I paid a missionary's fare—2s.—and I found a 2s. bit in Dunlop Street. Odd ?

Feb. 5, 1891.—The doctor told me to-day that father would not live very long—a few weeks—but he might be dead to-morrow. He knows, of course, that his illness is serious. He is getting thinner every day. But he is a godly man and has a strong grip of Christ.

My father would have talked well in any company. I think naturally he had a vigorous mind. When I was a boy I used to be greatly distressed because he did not begin his prayers like other people. Most men began with a great many attributes of God. My father always plunged into the very middle at once. I remember once after a Communion, for example, he began his evening prayer thus : ' O God, wash us after supper.' Of course he was always very narrow in his theological views. Dr. Dods dare not be mentioned before him. I once read one of Newman's sermons to him, which he praised immensely, and when he was done, and I told him whose it was, he was very angry ! He was awfully fond of the prayer-meeting.

Father has been very ill. To-day I told him about you when we were alone. I thought if God showed the Promised Land to Moses just before taking him to Heaven, it was right to tell my father a little. His life has not been so full of brightness as many a one's. I mean he has never had wealth nor great honour. The poor will enjoy Heaven most, I think. I asked him if he had any message. He was very weak, but he said, ' I 'm glad you told me. I 'm glad.' We 'll have his prayers now. I felt quite happy.

Wednesday, Feb. 25.—Father died to-night at half-past nine. I was not present. I left him at 6.40. When I got home from the prayer-meeting at twenty-five minutes past nine, my brother had called to say there was a great change for the worse. He did not speak for some time before his death—just took a few long breaths and died. The funeral will be on Saturday. I will exchange with Mr. M'Donald of

Airdrie, on Sabbath. I would not like not to preach that day—but not in Greenock. Mr. M'D. is a nice fellow. God of our Fathers, be our God.

March 2, 1891.—I spent most of the evening with my mother. I took her an ear trumpet, or rather conversation tube, which I bought in Hilliard's to-day. An old gentleman in Greenock had one, and on Friday I got the loan of it for two hours to let my mother try it. I have too many regrets about things I might have done for my father; so I resolved to put off no more time in doing this for my mother.

1891, *March* 4.—A week already since my father died! I just took the ordinary chapter at the prayer-meeting to-night—the one that comes in course—2 Kings xi. 1, the one about Athaliah and the little king kept concealed for six years. I thought it very suitable after all. My father took a gloomy view of things as a rule, as many godly Israelites did. God's promises seemed broken, David's race extinct, and then—in an instant—' they saw the king's son.' There are some saints like Jehoiada and Jehosheba and the nurse—who must have been singular people, keeping such a secret all that time—who knew the secret of the Almighty. Most saints are like the disciples going to Emmaus—' cast down.' Didn't the chapter come in very well? What a lot my father knows now. If it had been possible to describe the joy of departed spirits, surely God would have done it.

April 4, 1891.—I talked about the man with the ink-horn in Ezekiel—about the census, in fact. I asked the people to fill it in just before or after family worship. It is a solemn time. Ten years are a big bit of life. The people seemed interested. No census was ever taken in Britain before this century. Old Mrs. Bowles, who was in church to-day, ninety last February, has been numbered in them all. Christ was numbered at Bethlehem.

April 7, 1891.—The last letter I write before I 'm forty!

I 'm just going off to the Discharged Prisoners' Home, then meeting of session, then 'good-bye' to the thirties. It makes me feel quite sad. 'Forty years was I grieved with this generation, to whom I sware in My wrath'—I hope that won't be so with me. Moses was forty when he was turned away from Egypt. Whatever the next forty years may bring, may God's love and God's guidance not be wanting.

May 27, 1891.—Called to-day on my oldest member, aged ninety-one. She fell ten days ago and hurt her head. She lives all alone. Hadn't tasted porridge for a time, and was wearying for some. So I made up the fire and made some—lovely—a saucerful, which you could not have done! I washed the little goblet and the stick. The goblet was bought in Manchester thirty-six years ago, four inches in diameter.

At the Oxford School of Theology there was a conference one night on pastoral visitation. The *British Weekly* gave a short account of it. A lot of swells spoke. The last paragraph ran thus:—'But, perhaps, not the least suggestive remark was one made at the very close by a young minister in a speech which lasted less than a minute—that one ought most of all to visit the people whom one was unwilling to visit.' That is a favourite notion of mine, learned by bitter experience. To-day one of the young Irish ministers, who was at Oxford, tells me it was he who said it, and it was I who gave him that advice before he was ordained!

I like to go before the cricket matches begin, and field the balls when they are practising. I have seen dozens looking on, and nobody running after the ball but myself. I do it because I like it, and for exercise, and because I want to show that a minister loves to see young folks play.[1]

[1] I have been told that when the 'new minister' paid his first call at a house in the country where two large families of cousins lived, the boys all fled, and hid in the barn. They expected he would ask them to repeat some of the Questions in the *Shorter Catechism*. When brought forth to meet him, to their very great surprise, his first question was—'Where is your football?'

Wednesday, Sept. 16, 1891.—We had a nice prayer-meeting to-night—about three hundred present at least. Mr. Hogg gave a fine address. There was no collection. I think a missionary address without one word about money should help to do away with the idea that we can't have a missionary meeting without taking a collection.

Jan. 16 (*Sab.*), 1892.—I enjoyed talking about Naomi to-day. I said she just ran a little ahead of Providence. If she had allowed God to finish the book the story would have had no blemish. I think that, making every allowance for patriarchal simplicity and the age and godly character of Boaz, Naomi erred—as she had done before in going to Moab. She could not tarry the Lord's leisure. If she could say, 'The man will not rest till he have finished the matter,' she might have said that about God with more reason. It would have been a more charming story if she had let God take all the steps and if she had not gone to glean in the fields of her own cleverness and wisdom. I think my mother was a bit like Naomi—a little given to interfering with Providence, a little apt to trust her own skill. Boaz and Ruth became the ancestors of Christ, not because they were geniuses, but simple, God-fearing people, who did common everyday work as well as they could.

'Thy King cometh, meek, riding upon an ass'—a promise not fulfilled till He was within five days of His death, and very strangely fulfilled. Isn't it bonnie, Christ's letting its mother run alongside lest the wee foal should be vexed? Thinking of it and of its mother in the midst of His own triumph lasting forty minutes or so! Even so yet He comes lowly to each one of us asking our love—despised, distrusted, rejected, wronged, even by those who love Him.

Charles Kingsley was engaged when he was twenty-four, married when twenty-five years of age. He had been in great distress, no prospect of things opening up! Mark xi. 24 ('Whatsoever ye desire when ye pray, believe,' etc.) saved him from madness that year. I have noted that text.

I note every famous text with any story I see now in my Bible, and if spared to come to the New Testament at the prayer-meeting, I hope I shall have a really good original anecdote for every chapter. Kingsley and his wife searched out all passages about servants and masters in the Bible. When he died, all the servants in the house had lived with him from seventeen to twenty-six years, and would have given their lives for their master. He wrote long, long letters to his lass—noble dissertations on all sorts of things. He speaks of a 'noble fear' as an element of his married life. He liked the Elizabethan phrase used by husband to wife—'My dear Dread!'

I wish I could write one good poem or song and live to hear it sung in the streets.

Another coincidence! Eliot, apostle of the Indians, aged eighty-six, I read yesterday, survived his old comrades so long that he said, 'They 'll think I 'm away to the wrong place.' Three hours after, I read that Jay of Bath, also eighty-five, said, 'They 'll think up there I 've lost the way.'

A happy day—a baptism in the afternoon, Lydia M'Crea. I spoke on—'Lydia whose heart the Lord opened.' At midday a very respectable Highland couple who were in the church in the forenoon came into my room to speak about their souls. Mr. M'Neill's preaching had roused them, and they were afraid they had lost the day of grace. They were both crying. We had an hour's talk and they seemed a little comforted. I am to call on them.

A most interesting and exciting cricket match here yesterday, and yet I feel cricket is not what it once was to me. My father began to like it seventeen years ago, and liked it to the end. So I am ageing quickly. On Thursday I stepped off the pavement not to disturb three little girls at skipping-rope. One of them said—'Let that auld man pass!'

(Church to be white-washed.) I felt queer to have to say there would be no prayer-meeting this week. First time the fire has gone out for ten years. I hope it won't suffer. Denney says the gift of continuance is a great grace.

Old Mrs. Howie, whom I wished you so much to see, is thought to be dying. I meant her to be the very first person I would take you to. I had a little talk with her, and she took my hand very lovingly and spoke very kindly. She was never done repeating 'My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness.'

Dec. 8, 1892.—Old Mrs. Howie died yesterday. Her face was most beautiful. I could have kissed it.

The name of the baby baptized was 'Isabella,' which is, of course, the Spanish or Low Latin of El-iza-beth, which is the Hebrew Elisheba. It means the oath of God. So there was a fine subject to work on. Oddly, we had had that name in the forenoon's chapter—the sister of the prince of Judah and the wife of Aaron. I said God wished the wee girl to be a sister of the Prince of the tribe of Judah and a bride for the High Priest. The baby behaved splendidly.

In the chapter in Exodus, in which God gives Moses' genealogy, God goes over Reuben first, then Simeon (as they were the elder brothers, whose duty it was to save Israel. Even Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman, is mentioned. He too had a chance of doing work for God. Then Levi's tribe is taken—the tribe that had been cursed along with Simeon. Two or three times God says, 'This is that Moses and Aaron'; as if God had got on to His favourite subject. In Revelation it is still the 'Song of Moses.'

'Whose fan is in His hand.' I began the sermon meaning to speak of the different winds that try us. The mild wind of prosperity—the rough one of adversity—but the subject took on a new light as I was writing. John's sermon looks a very ferocious one—'Generation of vipers,' 'wrath to come,' 'ax at the root of the trees,' 'fan in His

hand,' and how can one reconcile these with 'glad tidings'? If one reads the chapter slowly, one sees it is full of love. John's favourite name for Christ was 'the Lamb of God.' The words, 'whose fan is in His hand,' are not a sign of anger but of His gentleness. For the winnowing wind was a gentle wind—the evening breeze—not a storm. 'The Lord in the still small voice.' The threshing—the knowledge of good and evil—was a rough process—the evils of sin—and you and I know them apart from experiences—but the fanning is a gentle work. Christ wants the good and evil in us separated, not by judgment, but by obedience to the word of His mouth. He says, 'Fear not.' That 's gentle fanning—but we won't obey Him, won't take His word, and so we have to learn by Providence and bitter experience. Trials are sent us, and He shows us there was no need to fear, but it would have been easier to learn it from His word. After the winnowing, which takes place at night, comes the sifting, the separating of rubbish that did not blow away, and that is rough work done by day. So we have to be cleansed roughly in sight of the world from what we should have parted with readily long ago.

Caroline Herschel found eight comets. Like you, she has done many a *Morning Watch.*

'Every one that passeth under the rod.'—Lev., last chapter. 'Thy rod and Thy staff,' etc. The rod is not meant for affliction at all, but to us—'to pass under the rod' means that. A shepherd doesn't have a rod in order to *beat* his sheep.

My subject to-morrow is Noah in the ark. God shut him in and God let him out. So I hope you and I will stay in His pavilion till He let us go free. He has given us many an olive leaf to show that the time of deliverance is drawing nigh.

Sept. 16, 1893.—My texts for the Communion will all be out of the chapters that come in regular course. Last Sabbath, Exod. x., 'Who are they that shall go?' To-

morrow, action sermon—Exod. xi., 'But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue'—the peace of the day of a sinner's redemption. In fencing and serving the tables, I shall take the twelfth chapter, about the Paschal lamb, without blemish—slain—its blood sprinkled—a lamb for which the one house was too small. (He taketh away the *sin of the world.*) Not a bone to be broken, eaten reverently, all to be eaten, none left, nothing slovenly, not to be treated as if it were a common meal. Then when we part I shall speak of its being eaten in haste, staff in hand, the Egyptians after them. In talking to the children—'Who are they that shall go to worship the Lord?' 'Our little ones.'—I shall show that the children were specially to ask, 'What mean ye?' The lamb had been four days in the house. Most likely the children were playing with it, putting their arms round its neck, sleeping with it, and then they were told it was to be slain. Its death would vex them. In the evening I shall take for my text Pharaoh's words in the chapter, 'Take your flocks and your herds with you, and be gone, and *bless me also.*' Moses had said, 'I will not see your face again.' Yet when Pharaoh cried for him, Moses came. Many a sinner wants a blessing even when he says 'Begone.' 'The young man went away sorrowful.' 'Orpah lifted up her voice and wept.'

Had a note from Mr. M. P. Johnstone wanting to see me about a matter of importance. Went on my way home. Riddell, F.C., Glasgow, an old Cameronian, moderator of F.C. Gorbals congregation, said seven hundred and fifty members would choose me at once. I would not be asked to preach. Mr. M. P. J. was to get my consent. Of course I said 'No.' Would not think of it for a moment. Mr. J. pleaded hard with me.

Sept. 23, 1893.—My text, 'the pillar of cloud and fire.' God led the Israelites from the start, taking complete control of them. Our notion of guidance is getting directions at certain difficult points. God's is—guiding us even

when the way is easy, making the commonplace path delightful and not commonplace. More than that, He goes Himself with us. He doesn't dwell aloft and signal to us. He is one of our company. His life and ours are bound up together, making years of Divine Personal history for Himself as well as for us. Wasn't it good of Him not leading them the way of the Philistines because it would have discouraged them ?

We had a very large prayer-meeting. It was the twenty-sixth chapter of Job, and I spoke about the *little* chapters of the Bible. There are only eighty-one with not more than ten verses, and fifty-seven of these are in the Psalms. The average length of each in the O.T. is twenty-five verses ; in the New, thirty-one. I found out these things my own self. I have read to-day and yesterday a volume of Lightfoot's sermons—very good. He was Bishop of Durham, before that Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, a wonderful scholar. I once heard him preach in St. Paul's on the text, 'I can do all things.' There is a sermon on that text in this volume, but quite a different one. He was a great man for purity of life—the White Cross League. There is a fine earnestness in the book. He lays great emphasis in sermon after sermon on the discipline of morning prayers—good even for the body.

Nov. 11, 1893.—We are not going to put any more Bible Questions in the *Watch* for a time at least. . . .

I have been writing a few words of farewell to the children who have answered the questions. I wonder when I 'll write my farewell to the little *Watch* altogether. I hope, whether I know it is the last number or not, that my last words in it will be memorable ones. It may be it will be you who will have to finish it. Who knows ? I would like your name to be in it at least once.

Mrs. Bowles, a poor, but, I believe, a good woman, our oldest member, died on the 8th of last month. She was

ninety-three years of age all but four months, and had been counted in every census that has been taken in Scotland, having been two weeks old when the first was taken in March 1801. She lived eighty-four years in one street, and fifty-nine of these on the same 'stair-head.' The last word I heard her say, or rather, try to say, was the word 'mansions' in the 14th chapter of John, a few verses of which I was repeating to her as she lay dying. As I looked at her little house, so little that three or four people seemed to fill it, I thought no place could be more unlike a 'mansion' in our English sense of the word. Yet, as I remembered the long time she had lived in it, for she had outlived several landlords of the property, I thought no house ever better deserved to be called a 'mansion' in the Greek sense of the word—an abiding place. She knows both meanings now.

One day, two years ago, a large menagerie passed near her door. I asked her if she had seen the elephants and other wonderful beasts. 'No,' she said, 'I never saw them.' 'What!' I said, 'have you never in all your life seen an elephant?' 'Oh! many a time,' she replied, 'when I was young, *but I dinna care for them noo.*' I often think of that answer.

She was over eighty when I first knew her. She had a lodger then, a young man, who played football every moment he could spare, every night in the week. 'He is very kind to me,' she told me once, 'but he 's an awful man for footba', and he 's always talking about something he calls "goals," but I dinna ken what "goals" is.'

I am sure she knows what a goal is now—the goal or mark of which Paul speaks to the Philippians, where the winners get the prize of the high calling of God in Christ.

CHAPTER XI

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER-DIARY

1894–1897

'There are works which, with God's permission, I would do before the night cometh. But, above all, let me mind my own personal work—to keep myself pure and zealous and believing—labouring to do God's will, yet not anxious it should be done by me rather than by others, if God disapproves of my doing it.'—*Last entry in* DR. THOMAS ARNOLD'S DIARY, *written two evenings before his forty-seventh birthday. He was dead the following morning.*

Tuesday, Jan. 16, 1894.—Two years to-day since my mother died. I was pleased to see the text for the day was 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it'—the words of Christ's mother, and, I am sure, of your mother and mine too. And I hope we 'll both obey.

My congregation urged me strongly to take a holiday. They carried a proposal unanimously to add £50 to my salary—having first asked me to retire for a little—but I told them when I came back that that was an illegal proposal—anything of that kind must be duly given notice of. I thanked them, and said when I took a big holiday I would let them pay the man who supplied my place.

Feb. 16, 1894.—I was in a house on Friday and found people reading a volume of the *U.P. Missionary Halfpenny Magazine*, forty-four years old. I used to read it long ago, and loved it dearly. I wonder if anybody will read ours forty-four years after this. I hope so. We don't know whom we are writing for, or drawing for; so we must do our best.

Mrs. Stewart began to cry to-night, saying I would need to get some other body, she is so blind.[1]

August 1894.—I 've been roping trunks and writing labels and feel queer. Mrs. Stewart is gone. A mavis and a sparrow came to the window to cheer us up just as we left the house. It was very wonderful. Mrs. Boyd went out first to wave to us when the car came in sight. Mrs. Stewart and I went into the dining-room to wait. She had put out crumbs in the morning. As we went in, a sparrow flew away, and then two, which stayed on a tree together. We were close to the window, and then came a mavis with a lovely breast, and stood looking at us, and said quite distinctly, 'Fear not. You are of more value than many mavises.' It stood looking a long time and then began to eat. You have no idea how it cheered us both. I wrote to Whithorn to have a conveyance, and I have also written a letter which she will get to-morrow night. Don't be angry with me for feeling Mrs. Stewart's going away so much. I hoped, if it had been God's will, that she would have been here to welcome us when we were married, and in Greenock for us to call on, but that chapter of history is evidently not to be. Before leaving, she bought me a bowl for my milk for porridge—wee thick one —because it had 'forget-me-nots' on it. Poor body,

[1] Mrs. Stewart, the widow of a schoolmaster, had been housekeeper to J. P. S. for fifteen years and a half, from the time he first went to Whithorn, and she had been very kind to him. When her eyesight was beginning seriously to fail, her sister, Mrs. Boyd, also a widow, came to help her. There was a great contrast between the sisters, Mrs. Stewart being as gentle and refined as Mrs. Boyd was loud and boisterous. The home of the latter during her married life had been situated close to a railway cutting, her nearest neighbour living on the other side. Conversation was possible, but it had to be carried on in the loudest tones, and the habit had become permanent. When Mrs. Boyd came to Eldon Street the neighbours objected to her loud voice, and J. P. S. had to interview her and give her a gentle hint. Having retired, she was heard from a distant part of the house saying in her broad Galloway accent—'It 's an a-aful hoose thus, if a boady cauna speak abune a whusper wi'oot being cha-acket.' J. P. S. provided a little house for the sisters until Mrs. Stewart's death, nine years after she left him; and he always sent her a weekly letter or newspaper.

when she showed it to me I saw they were not forget-me-nots—green things with red berries—but, of course, I said nothing. Her sight had deceived her. I have told her I had my milk in the forget-me-not bowl.

To-day my text was, 'Thrice was I shipwrecked.' My object was to show what a big thing God's love was. No man has a right to keep quiet about a wreck or any notable providence or deliverance. But if Luke and God said nothing about these shipwrecks in Acts, it was because the proclamation of God's love in new lands—the story of the Cross—was such a wonderful thing that it had no right to be mentioned in the same book. And when Paul did mention it, it was only to humble himself at the thought of Christ using him in His own work, and he only told it because he was forced to, and felt as if he were out of his senses even daring to speak of it. Great as all these experiences were, the best was to come—love doing even greater things—a bigger shipwreck, and all his epistles except those to the Corinthians and Thessalonians yet to be written, and a martyr's death still to be faced. I told of the Hamilton U.P. missionary, Mr. Wylie, murdered ten days ago in China. Said it should be a joy to us that there was still a road to the martyr's crown from Scotland, and young fellows willing to tread it. I asked if there were any in our church willing to go. After the sermon a lad came to bid me good-bye—a F.C. student employed all summer in the Lands Valuations Office here. He said he had come every Sabbath afternoon all summer to our church and wished to thank me, as this was his last Sabbath. He said Christ was more than ever to him as the result of my preaching. He also said that some time ago he had made up his mind to go to China. Nice? O God, make us more worthy of all the loving-kindnesses done to us.

In Penpont. Am very glad in some ways to give my people a change. They do get tired of the same voice. A very, very cold day. I bought Principal Shairp's book on Burns to read, and have just read this on the poem

'Willie brewed a peck o' maut':—'Within ten years these three men, Burns, Willie Nicol, and Allan Masterton, were all under the turf. And in 1821, John Struthers, a Scottish poet, little known, but of great worth and some genius, says:—

"Nae mair in learning Willie toils,
Nor Allan wakes the melting lay,
Nor Rab, wi' fancy-witching wiles,
Beguiles the hour o' dawning day.
For tho' they were na very fou,
That wicked wee drap in the e'e
Has din its turn; untimely noo
The green grass waves o'er a' the three."'

That 's pretty poor poetry—but my grand-uncle's.

The D.D. often makes me greatly ashamed.[1] It may be God means me to ask myself why I was unworthy. I know many men fifty times worthier of it. If I know my own heart, that and that only was my reason for declining it. To think of the number of good men who haven't it would make me blush at the idea of my having it. Paton, the old librarian here, congratulated me on *not* being a D.D. I can't look at it impartially now, because I have got so much praise, but when I was able to take a clear view of it I would have despised myself if I had taken it; and if I have made a mistake (which, I am sure, I have not), I would rather a hundred times, I hope, make that mistake than make the other. I think the love ministers show for the degree is very pitiable. It is not posing, but stating a solemn but painful fact, when I say that from no point of view do I deserve it. It was Professor Dickson that proposed my name, and what he said was this—of course I could not tell it to any one but you—'Mr. Struthers is a genius. I could not explain him to you; you would need to know him; but I think it quite likely he is a man who would not accept D.D.' I 'm sorry for you to-morrow

[1] In March 1895 the University of Glasgow offered to confer the degree of D.D. upon J. P. Struthers. This offer he respectfully declined.

when you see the D.D.'s capped. I don't think I could have refused it if I had had a month to think it over. But I felt so sure I was right when I did refuse it that I think we ought to have no reflections.

The Allans were very kind. I went to Largs. Coachman met me to say that I was to go back to Wemyss Bay and be picked up there. My letter had come too late. I got a good tossing going out in the small boat. Our steering-wheel broke just after I got on board. Bob very kind. Sorry I did not take the degree. He sat up for an hour urging me from all points of view to go to Norway with them, and I really would try to go if I could, but there are several folks, old and young, who can't live long, and a lot of other things to keep me at home. They start from Aberdeen on the 1st or 2nd of August. The *Katoomba* belongs to Charlie and Claud. She is four hundred and eighty tons. My berth is reserved for me! They would let me off at Bergen, if I wished, about the 20th.

To go to Norway will be quite out of my power. Three of my congregation are dying, and I would not like to be away. The congregation have often asked me to take a holiday.

Perhaps we should have stayed on the old site for our church. But I can honestly say that the thing that moved me to agree to leaving it was this, that if we had built a bigger church where we were we would have blocked up a lot of windows in other properties, and it seemed a shabby thing to do. The red stone looks pretty and may be God will over-rule mistakes, if we have made them, and make all things turn out well. What made me like the transept was that there might be nice places for the children to watch the Communion from. I always think children should be present at the Communion.

An idea about our church entrance occurred to me in the train to-day, all in a moment. The thing that made me anxious was this. The high gable of the transept and the

gable of the tenement alongside form a kind of perspective, and narrow the appearance of the entrance. Originally the door was meant to be in the middle of the space, but as it is unusual to have the entrance where it is, the difficulty of finding it at a glance is increased by the fact that the door is not altogether seen from the street. It suddenly occurred to me that possibly the man who sold us the feu, and who owns the one to the left, might sell one four or five feet up to the tenement, and that would widen the approach. I would have to buy it, and give it to the church, for the Ferguson Bequest won't give us anything if our church costs over £3000. It seemed like an inspiration. I prayed over the matter and called on the man, and he will think about it. He is a little unwilling to lessen the size of his feu, but he was very kindly. He is a builder and thinks nine feet enough, and so it would be if there were a street on the other side. If the feu were sold it would jam us in. If we got four feet—and I fear a window in the tenement basement would make more impossible—it would allow us to alter the position of the street gable, and let the door be more visible. Some of the congregation seem anxious, and I feel as if I were a good bit responsible for the whole thing. I hope God will bring something out of this idea if it be His holy will.

I have been running about all day since 8.30, and have had no dinner save a penny roll, seeing, or trying to see, the architect and the lawyer. I think we may look upon it as practically settled that we may purchase thirty-four square yards—six feet wide, fifty feet long. It will cost £17, but I know you won't grudge it, and I hope all has been done by God. It will improve the access immensely.

Our Building Committee accepted the offer of the bit of ground last evening very gratefully.

Sept. 1895.[1]—Professor Masson was very pleasant last evening. His son, Professor of Chemistry in Melbourne,

[1] While on a visit to Professor William Ramsay.

one of Ramsay's old assistants, was there, and his wife, a daughter of Professor John Struthers of Aberdeen. All J. S.'s family were there, and most kind. They asked if I had seen J. S.'s poems. I said I had. The elder unmarried daughter most anxious I should prove to be a relation. They invited me to see them in Edinburgh.

Smellie of Stranraer is to edit the *Sunday School Teacher*, a magazine of the Sunday School Union. He asks me for three or four articles. When one has only a few loaves and fishes for oneself, is one justified in dividing them amongst a multitude ? But I am very much in his debt.

Sept. 24, 1895.—Grant and I went over our chapters for the meeting to-night. His is the 2nd Psalm. I said God's word to Christ—'Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance'—were just as if a mother said, 'What would you like for your birthday ? I would like to give you this.' And Grant said, 'Oh ! The Eternal Son of God having a birthday !' And I said, 'Thou art Mine only Son. This day have I begotten Thee.' He smiled very sweetly and reverently, and said, 'I acknowledge.'

Thirteen at our High School Class dinner. One hundred and thirteen in our class. Thirty dead. Six of them suicides ! The last of the six joined the class the same day as I did. At the dinner there were eight married men and five bachelors, two teetotallers, two non-smokers. I would only have known three if I had met them on the street. They were very kind to me, and demanded a reason for refusing the D.D.

November 30, 1895.—Was asked definitely to-night if I would let my name be mentioned to a congregation in Sydney, a very large one. They are Psalm-singers, and would like one of the old school.

Cook, the circus man, was in our church to-day again. They say he is a good fellow. He had to go out of the

church because of his cough, but came back ten minutes after, and walked like a mouse up to my seat again. He gave me a low bow—sitting in the pulpit—as the church 'scaled.'

Nov. 9, 1895.—The *Morning Watch* must have cost us one way and another in actual payment, £80; but neither of us regrets it, I am sure. I wonder if we 'll run a magazine in Heaven?

A poor woman has given me 10s. for the new church—she comes to the prayer-meeting—saved by knitting! It humbles me.

I 'm wearying to hear what you think of Bob's gift. £50 would have pleased me immensely.[1]

Jan. 25.—Dr. Dickson, Professor of Divinity, is to get a presentation on Thursday. I think I should like to go. . . . John Sloan took me up to Dr. Dickson and said, 'Dr. Struthers.' Dr. Dickson said, 'He wouldn't let me call him "Dr."' After the meeting was over he said to me, 'I can't make you D.D. now, and I can't call you so against your will. Come and see me.' He was very kind.

Got a letter from an old chum—Tom M'Cracken. He lives in New York, and he has sent me £50 for the new church. Fifty pounds—not dollars! God has been very kind. Five pounds would have pleased me. Fifty pounds is wonderful!

When I was in M. P. J.'s church last evening there was a cat which went about mewing. I hoped it would come my way, and indeed it did, and got up on my knee, and there it sat, I stroking it for forty minutes. It only mewed twice when it wanted to change its position.

Last evening I took a bottle of whisky out of a drunk man's pocket, and smashed it before a lot of people and

[1] Mr. Allan had handed J. P. S. a cheque for £100 for the building of the new church.

children at Lynedoch Street Station at eight o'clock. At eleven I found the same man on the ground near Prince's Pier. I got a policeman, and we wakened him. He had come from Paisley and meant to catch the Belfast boat.

Letter from young Wylie—he has been in Gourock all winter, and has come to the prayer-meeting—with £50 for our new church!

March 1896. (*Communion.*)—I think I'll talk about the Gibeonites on Sabbath. I like a subject that occupies the whole day, and there are many things in the chapter suitable for table addresses. I'll take for the evening, 'Hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord'—a good text. The Gibeonites came with a lie, and yet they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, and God took them. God would have taken them as they were—they did not need to scheme. Yet how different the Israelites were from God! They received the Gibeonites because they thought they were not Canaanites; God receives us because He knows we *are*.

Our last Communion in the old church. It was a very, very happy day.

Just returned from hearing Chalmers of New Guinea. Splendid! It humbles one to listen to him. I felt thankful I was not '*Dr.*' when I saw such a man 'Mr.'

I have a great notion of a clock for our new church, with brass weights and a big, big pendulum. There is something awfully solemn about their movement. A mere clock face with nothing visible seems cold and unimpressive. It tells the time, but one with the great brass pendulum shows time actually going, and to me it seems like the very voice of God.

Our church entrance is nice and wide now. I often remember how anxious I was about it last year. I find that many were afraid, and some were saying it was a

'regular bungle.' We really ought to be very thankful indeed that the extra six feet were got. It was a big mercy.

Saturday evening, Aug. 8.—I hope God will be with us to-morrow.[1] He has but three more arrows to shoot on a Sabbath day. I hope He Himself will take the bow and pierce the heart of His enemies.

Sabbath, 9th, 12.5 A.M.—O God, make this a great day for Thy Son. 10.50 A.M.—I hope Christ will stand among us and cry loudly to-day. Surely we may expect Him to be about His Father's business. 5.45.—So far the day has gone well. I hope we shall have a great blessing to-night. For Christ's sake. Amen.

Monday, Aug. 10, 1896.—The church was very full yesterday, especially afternoon and evening. People were sitting on the pulpit stairs and on forms in the passages. A very godly man, a Mr. Young, a U.P., closed with prayer at night and pronounced the benediction.

Wednesday, August 12, 1896.—6.20 P.M.—It has been a very wet day. It cleared up a little after five, and has been fair since. I was hoping it would be bright for our last prayer-meeting in the wee kirk, but it is darkening down again. Jer. xxiii.—the chapter with 'Jehovah Tsidkenu' in it. Many a dull day I have had in years past, and it got bright towards evening, especially on the prayer-meeting night. It brings up many, many thoughts. I hope God will be with us to-night, and that He will go with us and never be absent. For the sake of His dear Son, Jesus Christ.

August 15, 1896. 9.30 *Saturday evening.*—A very solemn meeting to-night. Perhaps one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty present.

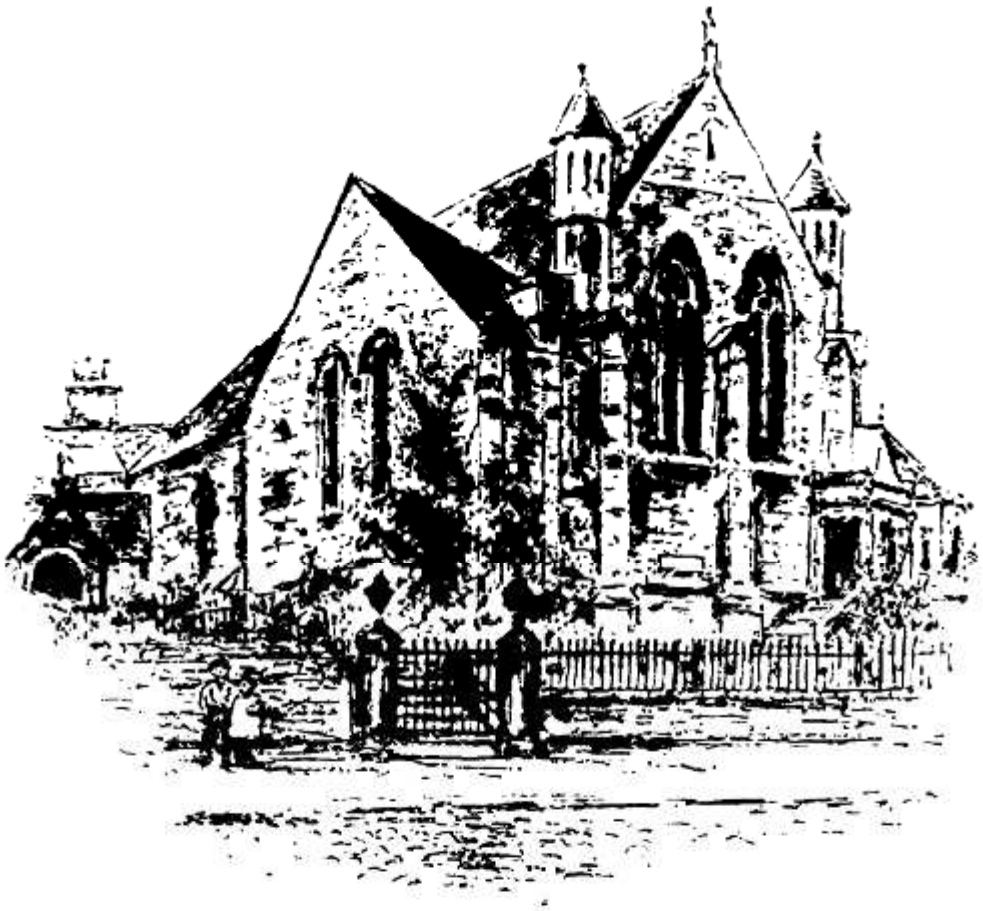
Aug. 16.—*Sabbath,* 8 A.M.—This day has come at last. I hope a day of the Lord Jesus. 10.10 A.M.—Starting for

[1] Last Sabbath in old church.

church. Go with us, O God. 'Shine forth, Thou that dwellest between the cherubim,' for Christ's sake. 10.40.—In the vestry. 'O God, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.' 1 o'clock.—All well, and the glory be to God. The people seemed to have heard. 4 P.M.—Still thanks are due—a good day. 5.15.—The people seemed to hear. It was very full in the morning. I had to sit on the pulpit steps. Afternoon as in forenoon—people in the corridor, and some had to go away. A most charming day, and the three babies were as good as gold. The first, Alexander Whiteside—a great drop of water lay on the corner of his eye all the time. I said, 'Be thou like Alexander, the son of Simon the Cyrenian, who bore the cross for Christ.' To the second, Martha Marshall, I said, 'Be thou like Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus, whom Jesus loved.' The third, William Smith, I said, was baptized for the dead; named after a brother who had died in infancy, and to him I said, 'Have thou a double portion of the Spirit, and bear the name not only of thy brother, but of the Elder Brother, who is also thy Lord.' We sang Ps. cxliv. 12.5 A.M.—The day has gone well. Church, corridor, vestry, filled to their utmost capacity. Dr. M'Allister began ten minutes before the time—a very fine sermon. Collection in all £114. Thanks be to God for all His loving-kindness. My room is lovely. Curtains and brushes and three flower-pots, and a little dish of sweetpeas. A picture over the mantelpiece of the old church looking terribly forlorn.

Wednesday, Aug. 26, 1896.—I am a little anxious about the meeting to-night. I have to stand behind a table. In the old church there was a desk and tassels. I could grip them and get on fine, but no tassels now.

Saturday.—A boy I baptized in Glasgow sixteen years ago, who lives in Darvel and is learning to be a joiner, sent me eight shillings for the new church—his first fortnight's wages—good, isn't it? I mean to tell my people to-morrow.



The New
and the Old
Reformed
Presbyterian
Church
Greenock.

Sab., August 30, 1896.—Another day of very great mercy. Church full forenoon and afternoon—eight or nine on the platform in the afternoon. *Forenoon.*—'The Angel (Christ) who came up from Gilgal to Bochim'—Gilgal, the first possession of the Israelites in Canaan, the place of circumcision and the Passover, the twelve stones, the last place of manna, the first of the corn. Christ comes straight from the place of our vows and of His promises—to reprove us. It is a strange expression. As if I did wrong and Christ said—'I have come straight to you from the place where I gave you happy experiences.' *Afternoon.*—1 Chron. xxviii. 4—'He liked me.' I don't think many know that is in the Bible. A pretty phrase and a rich one. What a wonderful boyhood and youth David had, and he spoilt it all. The church looked pretty to-day, and the acoustics are perfect. I find it a little harder on my voice, but I speak more slowly, and people say it sounds nicer. The singing too is sweeter.[1] It is a real joy to go to the church.

Sept. 20, 1896.—A most lovely day! We had bright sun, and it made our curtains like gold. Nice flowers in the church. Our singing sounds much sweeter. Our back entrance was used to-day for the first time. We have a tremendous lot as a congregation to be thankful for. We used to have a dove over the old pulpit, with an olive leaf. The young people all liked it. I think they are going to put it up in the new church, and I am well pleased.

Sabbath evening, Nov. 29, 1896.—Began my senior class to-night and liked it well.[2] I hope to go through the

[1] J. P. S. was always deeply interested in and proud of his congregational singing. There was no instrument, but the members had all been well trained, and the parts were fully sustained all over the church. He sometimes said, 'Let our singing be so sweet and so musical that the passer-by on the street will be compelled to stop and say, "Hush! it is the song of the redeemed."'

[2] About this time the two classes for the young people of the congregation which had been held on Friday evenings were combined into one class, meeting on Sabbath evenings; and the weekly visits to the House of Refuge began to be made on Friday evenings.

Confession of Faith and tell them about the Christian Fathers. I spoke about the three great creeds—the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. I read the first and third. The Shorter Catechism is an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. Then I spoke about Origen, 'great from the cradle,' lived 186-255 A.D. There, I have given you a good lesson.

Dec. 29, 1896.—The year is nearly ended, a year of great anxiety and much mercy. It has seen our new church finished.

One of my Bible Class was accepted on Friday by the F.C. Women's Missionary Society as a teacher, and goes out, if all 's well, to Nagpur in October to take charge of a school. I think of asking my class to raise—perhaps £10 a year, to help to pay her salary, and that will keep up a bond between us. She is a fine girl, with a sweet face, and well educated. She was brought up in the Free Church, but to-day when she called she said it was my preaching that roused her. I was more pleased with that than if I had got £500.

When I was in Airdrie I met an old woman, Mrs. B——, who was servant more than forty years ago in the house of a gentleman where MacCheyne and Somerville and Mr. Alexander of Duntocher dined on the Monday after the Communion. Mr. Alexander was her minister. She has a New Testament with her name on it—'From her minister as a mark of approval of a prayer written by her,' etc.—odd exercise! They talked quite freely when she was waiting table, and she heard MacCheyne say, 'It was grace that saved me. I shall never be tired singing of grace.' And Mr. Somerville said, 'I don't know *when* I was brought in—I just know I *am* in the covenant.' And Mr. Alexander said, 'It was the law brought me in—I was thundered in.'

May 20, 1897.—Our old church is to be opened to-morrow as a Good Templar Hall. I half think of sending a letter and £1, just for my goodwill to the place and their cause. I have often asked God to keep it for an honourable purpose.

When the *City of Rome* (second largest steamer in the world) was opposite my windows yesterday, I noticed two Glasgow men and their wives and families—I judged them to be so—resting on the seats. I thought it might add to the pleasure of their holiday if they saw the steamer clearly. So I put on my boots and a lovely white tie, took my telescope, and went out, and after a little fell a-chatting and gave them a look through it. I also gave them all sorts of information as to its dimensions, etc., and thought them exceedingly apathetic and ungrateful. When I had finished, the younger of the men said, 'I ken her weel. I 've wrocht on her ever since she was laid doon!'

I went over Joshua before the Revised Version came out. Here is an original thought I had to-night. Joshua is the Hebrew for Jesus. God had spoken about the Lamb and the Anointed and the High Priest and the Prophet, but He longed to tell His secret and, if one may use a human simile reverently, as a man will sing a song often because a *certain name* is in it, and people see afterwards why he was so fond of it, so Hoshea was changed into Joshua (quite a different name), because God, so to speak, wanted to get using His Son's name—the name that is above every name.

I called on people to-day to whom I have been very kind, and who are not coming to church. I was told I passed them on the street, and in church no one took any notice of them. One of them said he had made up his mind to go to a church where Christ was more honoured. Another said, 'I ought to write out my sermons—Mr. Kerr always did, although he didn't read them.' I told her I always wrote out my sermons, and had the notes in my pocket, and she seemed a little astonished!

'Behold, I come as a thief.' I mean to speak a little about those who are unconscious all the time of their last illness. How strange they must feel when they awake and find how much doubt and sin and fear Christ has stolen from them when they were asleep!

One does feel that one has not done what one should have done for God and His cause. We 'll soon be in another world—within fifty years at the utmost. One feels that to have any money in the bank, and a missionary willing to go if money could be got, is very queer.

I had one hour and three-quarters in the Library in Glasgow, and then a stubborn fit came over me, and I wouldn't speak at the very meeting I had gone specially to! There is a cross-grained stratum pretty effectually through me, and I am sure you must have noticed it often. And I had had so much to please me. . . . A little girl on the street asked me for a match, and I said 'No.' Then I saw her ask another man. I went back and found she had lost a penny. I suspected her at first, but after a question or two—she said she could say a Psalm—I gave her a penny, but told her to keep on looking for the other. In ten seconds she came running after me; she had found her own and handed me back mine, but I told her to keep it.

You said nothing about the illustrated Shorter Catechism. Would it be a good plan to do one Question, or sometimes two, on every page, with, perhaps, one anecdote or pretty comment? Under the first I could quote for example what the New England villagers said when asked to do some fighting and remember what their chief end was for—'Our chief end is to catch fish.' It would tax your dear head to devise appropriate illustrations, but it would be a fixed task for two or three years or more, and some sheets could be printed and laid past, and one hundred or two hundred copies could be printed on which we could lose some money and, it may be, win some fame

and do some good. One could hardly illustrate 'Effectual Calling' by human figures, but one could have a church bell ringing, or a herald blowing a trumpet, or doves flying to their windows. It would be difficult, but it would be a great honour to us to be the authors of the *only* illustrated edition, and it would only be a loss—say, of the £50 you got from Mrs. ——!! There's a fine sentence about the Shorter Catechism in *Sentimental Tommy*, which would make a good introduction—'One of the noblest of books, which Scottish children learn by heart, not understanding it at the time, but its meaning comes long afterwards, and suddenly, when you have most need of it.' Isn't that perfect?[1]

From Carlisle I had the company of a Yankee who had run down to see Ayr, an intelligent chap, student of law in Germany, immensely interested in Covenanting history, and he fell in with a man who could answer all his questions! At Chester I was anxious to see Matthew Henry's chapel. Caretaker was out, and just as we despaired of getting in, a little girl who could get the key turned up. The chapel is now Unitarian. The collections taken the last three Sabbaths had been 6s. 2d., 7s., and 3s. Pulpit same as two hundred years ago; six or seven service books and old Bibles and torn intimations lying in it—very dirty. His Bible in a 'safe' in the vestry, and his table.

[1] The idea of an illustrated Shorter Catechism was never wholly abandoned, but other work intervened, and the opportunity never seemed to come.

CHAPTER XII

LETTERS FROM GREENOCK

1894–1899

'When we look into the long avenue of the future, and see the good there is for each one of us to do, we realise after all what a beautiful thing it is to work, to live and to be happy.' —R. L. STEVENSON.

'The account of the making of the Tabernacle occupies far more space than the history of the creation of the heavens and the earth. . . . The temporary character of the Tabernacle was no excuse for inferior work. . . . The Tabernacle was Eternity let down. . . . It represented eternal thoughts, eternal purposes of love. . . . It was a gate opening upon heaven.'—JOSEPH PARKER.

To Rev. James Denney

(*After his return from the United States.*)

June 1894.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—You won't have time even to read letters for some weeks. I just wish to say that I am glad, glad you are home, and glad for both your sakes that you were treated in the States so worthily. It was a delightful letter you sent to me. *Corinthians*,[1] Grant and I think glorious. He was greatly pleased with a phrase in the *Herald* about it—'the austere veracity.' My lamp is about out, and I still look for a bundle of your sermons; it may be the wick will hold out a week or two till you have a moment's leisure. We have almost resolved to buy a new site for our church—the opposite side of the street, one hundred and fifty yards farther west. I am greatly concerned about it, though I quite approve of it.

[1] Mr. Denney had published a volume on Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

I hope you find your congregation happy and united and full of love for you.—Yours affectionately,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
July 1894.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Do send me some sermons—any—they are just lying in a napkin at present; candles under bushels. I 'll use them wisely. If you knew how stupid I am. I had three days' yachting last week, but though I saw much I am no wiser. Let me have a lot, chosen at random, by to-morrow (Friday) night.

Do.

To which you must answer—*Do*, in the Latin tongue.—Yours, LAZARUS.

Dr. Dives,—I 'll not plagiarise, but my people will all be the better. You 'll have two congregations.

To the same

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
August 12, 1894.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—You must not take my delay in writing amiss. I have had visitors and arrears to get over that accumulated the days I was ill, and I 'm still very shaky about the legs. I am tired to-day, and can neither sit, nor stand, nor read, nor think. I speak honestly when I say your sermons have been a great help and joy to me. I have read most of them twice—some oftener—and mean to go over them all again. And though it was against orders, I read the 'weaned child' one to Mrs. Stewart[1] last evening, for she was greatly cast down. She says she will be quite blind in three weeks or so, and she wants me to get a little house for her. She won't hear of staying with me, and wishes to get into a house while she can still see. I hope blindness is not so near as that, but she was

[1] His housekeeper.

in great trouble, and your sermon both reproved and strengthened her. Her sister, who came to look after her, has lumbago, which seems to get worse daily.

And Mrs. Denney thought I was making game of you, asking to see your sermons. I am glad you disobeyed her; yet, I know, she must have consented too, and I am more grateful to you both than I can say. If I were to say what I think of them, or tell you how they instruct and, still more, how they urge me to preach better than I do, you would think me a clumsy flatterer. Yet the strongest words I could use would not be one whit too strong.

I am glad you think of publishing the lectures you delivered in Chicago. The only thing I know written about 'Inspiration' is a paper of Dr. Watson of Largs, which he read at the ministers' club here. Grant told me of it at the time. I am sure he could get the MS. for you—it is not published—and I am sure also it would be worth getting.

The texts I have liked best of late are in Lev. ii.—'The salt of the covenant of thy God.' I think God, so to speak, wished even to entrap the Israelites into friendship with Him. If a man offered any offering—or a woman, even a cake—the salt had to be put in it, and God said, 'Now there is an everlasting friendship between you and Me and your children for ever.' If a man has once asked a blessing on his food, though fifty years ago, God says, 'There is a tie between us.'

Preached lately on 'Walking and not fainting'—George A. Smith's idea of the climax being found in the commonplace. I like the promise—'Not faint,' which means everything, especially when one reads two verses before—'The Creator of the ends of the earth *fainteth not.*' So it is a big word. I liked, too, God's full forgiveness of David after Bathsheba's sin—not only forgave him, but opened up Heaven to him—'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' Heaven a place of meeting and of recognition and of reconciliation. The wee baby loving David; more wonderful still, David and Bathsheba loving one another, and Christ born of them. And David got

back his harp and sang Psalm li. Another text—'Thou shouldst have smitten six times'—the calm indifferent way with which people receive God's promises.

There were some nice texts lately in our chapters at the prayer-meeting, in Proverbs, about the sin 'of telling secrets'; 'he that boasteth of his gifts is like clouds without rain'; 'Proverbs of Solomon which men of Hezekiah wrote out'—the duty of catching up and handing down any good things we hear; a road to greatness open to us all. 'The sluggard's garden'—a look at a Christian's mind for sixteen waking hours—a day's work—result of college education and all the books and promises, etc. 'It is neither new moon nor Sabbath, wherefore go to Him to-day.' We know neither our privileges nor our necessities. . . .

How are you getting on with Nehemiah? When I return the sermons it is on condition, humbly but most honestly and earnestly presented, that you send me a lot more, the first that come to your hand. You don't know how they help me. . . .

Forgive this careless letter, but I 'm quite done to-day.—Ever yours gratefully, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

Sept. 1894.

. . . I AM at Ecclesiastes at the prayer-meeting. In three weeks I finish it. What do you advise about Song of Solomon? I feel that I would not like to go through it. What say you? What 's the right view of the book? Give me it in three sentences, and I 'll expand them and just spend one evening on the book. I 'm open to conviction on the matter.

My housekeeper and her sister went away three weeks ago, both ill, and it was just like a death to me. I have got another. But a fifteen and a half's year friend is not made in a day.

Remember, I mean to ask you to give our young Men's Literary Association your paper on Benvenuto Cellini next winter early. . . .

To Mr. James Thomson

(*Friend from the Rankeilour days, when he and J. P. S. had great practice of the songs of the American Jubilee Singers.*)

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Nov. 26, 1894.

MY DEAR JAMIE, AND FELLOW JUBILEE,—I had a note from W. W. G. less than two hours ago, sympathising with me on my second attack of quinsy in three months—notice how I compress information—in which he tells me, to my very, very great joy, that you are going to be married. You don't know how glad I am, and I wish you to let me know by return, of course after you have written your daily or hourly or quarter-hourly letter to Her—(1) Her church; (2) Her name; (3) Her habitation; (4) Her height, colour, of eyes, etc., etc., *ad libitum*; (5) Her accomplishments; (6) the date of the marriage; (7) full particulars as to length of engagement, favourite walks, number of letters per week ye have written, number of moments in the day when you don't think of Her—this last will be easy.

But first, will you kindly give my most dutiful regards to her, and my most hearty congratulations and my good wishes, and tell her she is getting an even finer fellow than she knows, and that is saying a good deal? I 'm awfully glad, Jamie. You deserve a good wife if ever man did. I was telling last week, to a delighted company, the low trick you played me at Stirling Station, when you addressed me as if I were your companion in burglarious expeditions, at which the other occupants of the carriage were greatly alarmed. You must tell your sweetheart that story. W. W. G. says I am to come at the New Year to recruit my shattered health, and he adds, 'We must get James Thomson.' Now, like a good lad, answer me quickly, for I am impatient to know as much of your happiness as I can.—Yours very, very happy

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Nov. 29, 1894.

MY DEAR JAMIE,—As I have some tinted sheets of paper which I cannot use in ordinary correspondence, and as your circumstances demand and justify a little harmless festivity, I save a sheet of ordinary paper and please you by thus addressing you. And as the postman by this time knows the real handwriting, he won't be tempted to blame Another. I am very busy to-day, else I should have nicked out the edges and scented it, but you will pardon the omission. My dear Jamie, it was a nice kind thing of you to write to me as you did, and I am happy in your joy.

You say she is vexed when you call her pretty. That proves to me conclusively that she is pretty, which is good, and that she is modest, which is better. I am longing to see her photograph. I advise all young folks, with only partial success, to marry in May, to help to undo the dishonour and reproach that people have brought on Scotland by thinking that it is an unlucky month, that is, a month that belongs to the devil, and not to God. I thank you again for your letter, and you may send me as many such as you like, and talk as much as you like about your lass, and I 'll think all the more of you both. Remember me very dutifully to her, and believe me yours, in great glee,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Alex. Murdoch

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
March 28, 1895.

MY DEAR MR. MURDOCH,—I never heard a word of the D.D.[1] till I got a letter from Dr. Stewart on Friday morning. He said it had been given unanimously, and told me the

[1] See page 205.

kind of robes I was to wear at the capping. But I know no more. Who proposed me, and what it was for, are as great a mystery to me as they seem to be to every other body. . . . I was thunderstruck by the whole business, and meant to tell nobody. But the list in the *Herald* opened the sluice gate of ridicule. Only, I must say I got nothing but kind letters. The laughter I can only imagine. I had a kind letter from Dr. Hutcheson that pleased me immensely. Yours, too, has greatly delighted me. I am longing to see you get the LL.D. You have evidently had a bad winter. My troubles have been only frozen pipes—and the D.D., which was worse than a deluge.—I am, dear Mr. Murdoch, yours very gratefully

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. James Denney

March 1895.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Ever since I got Stewart's letter on Friday, and saw to my horror the thing in the *Herald*, the words '*impar congressus*' have been in my mind.[1] I hope they are appropriate. Denney and Struthers, a pretty pair; a heavenly steed and a dead ass. Of course I have declined it. Much as I love you, to stand by your side 'to give scale' on such a day I will not! It 's infinitely ridiculous. I should have looked for the Speakership sooner, and I *might* have taken that. And you would have liked me to be the goat in the well that you might display your agility! And Mrs. Denney too! But it is all past now, and I go to the grave a commonplace cuss.

Forgive the shortness of this. I 'm awfully busy with letters. But send me sermons—send sermons. *Do, if you love me.*

I am at Isaiah at the prayer-meeting, and I get help for every verse from you and D. D.D. I might call you and him. I 'm proud of all your greatness and honours, and

[1] The Rev. Jas. Denney at this time received the degree of D.D. from Glasgow University.

I wish you would go in for the Logic Chair. But if Mrs. Denney is to be forgiven, you must send sermons.—Yours ever, as heretofore, MR. J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
June 12, 1895.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Plato died at the age of eighty or eighty-one, and I have to set up a tombstone for him in the little *Watch*. Now I must either say nothing but simply —'He died,' or else say something which I am incapable of saying. I have an extract from Lowell's letters in which he says: 'Plato and Aristotle are not names but things. On a chart that should represent the firm earth and the wavering oceans of the human mind, they would be marked as mountain ranges, for ever modifying the temperature, the currents, and the atmosphere of thought; astronomical stations, whence the movements of the lamps of heaven might be observed and predicted.' That 's the kind of thing I wish—a few high falutin' words. I wouldn't ask you, of course, to write a treatise on him, but if you could say in five, ten, twenty, thirty lines what you would say to an intelligent working man who asked you what Plato was or did, *then* people would say of me, 'Isn't that good? No wonder they wished to make him D.D. He has all the knowledge of Plato and the pride of Diogenes.' See? If you think it cannot be done, and Lowell wouldn't do, I would simply say 'He died,' which, I presume, is incontrovertible.

I looked on for a few minutes at the two Assemblies. I hear Adamson will be the new Logic Professor. I wish you had gone in for it. Are you a political economist? One of the Viceroy's Indian Council, whom I know, has asked me to find out from that standpoint what can be said for or against a bill brought in by a Hindoo member to prevent the interest payable on a loan from being exigible after it has mounted up as high as the principal. I mean—no more is to be expected. It 's the old usury question, and, as he says, everybody borrows in India. It is a big question,

and I would like to help him if I could. Compound interest mounts up and up, and then the creditor impounds all the poor man has when it suits him. I know your opinion about the interference of ministers with dockers, but this is a different thing, and you might help to rule an empire.

What about the bundle of sermons you were to send ?

At the E.C. Assembly—Dr. Story, Moderator *pro tem.*—counsel pleading for member accused of drunkenness said, 'The 31st of December is one of the dates mentioned, but some latitude has always been allowed then'—member of court, 'Hear, hear.' Dr. Story, rising and gazing solemnly, 'Sir, remember you are here in the capacity of a judge, however unfit you may be for that position!' Good ?

Sermons—Plato—forgiveness—these are my demands.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

GREENOCK, *Aug.* 5, 1895.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Your sermons have been better for me and for my people than if I had been at many Summer Schools. . . . I hardly know which of them I like best. It pleases and touches me immensely to see how you love to talk about Christ's work. I would have liked to hear you preach the one on—'Do this in remembrance of Me,' in which you just tell the story of Christ's last hours.

I fear we have made a mistake in the mode of entrance—I mean the door—of our new church. We enter up the side of the building. It makes me ill to think of it. Of course we see it at its worst just now—narrow and dark. I fear we didn't ask God's guidance enough ; yet I hardly like to think He would allow us to make such a big blunder as I fear sometimes we have. Please don't refer to it. It is so much to get some one to think of one's difficulties without speaking of them. You speak so *finally* about lending me no more sermons that I feel it is of no use my trying to tell you how much good they have done me in ever so many ways. Every sermon of yours is a new field to me, some of them a new world. If you but knew the

delight and *help* they are to me, you would send me every one you could spare. Now, you are the elder son who said, 'I will not lend any more sermons unless he lends me his' (which are illegible, to say nothing else). Do not even the publicans the same? Is Mrs. Denney to be no better than a publican's wife? 'Afterwards he repented and went.'—Yours very thankfully, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

. . . I GOT a postcard two weeks ago asking me to pray for a lad who was going in for a very severe examination. I forgot all about him till days after the examination was past. On Wednesday I had a kind note saying my prayers had been answered; he had passed! It made me feel very queer. . . .

To Mr. Thomas M'Cracken, New York

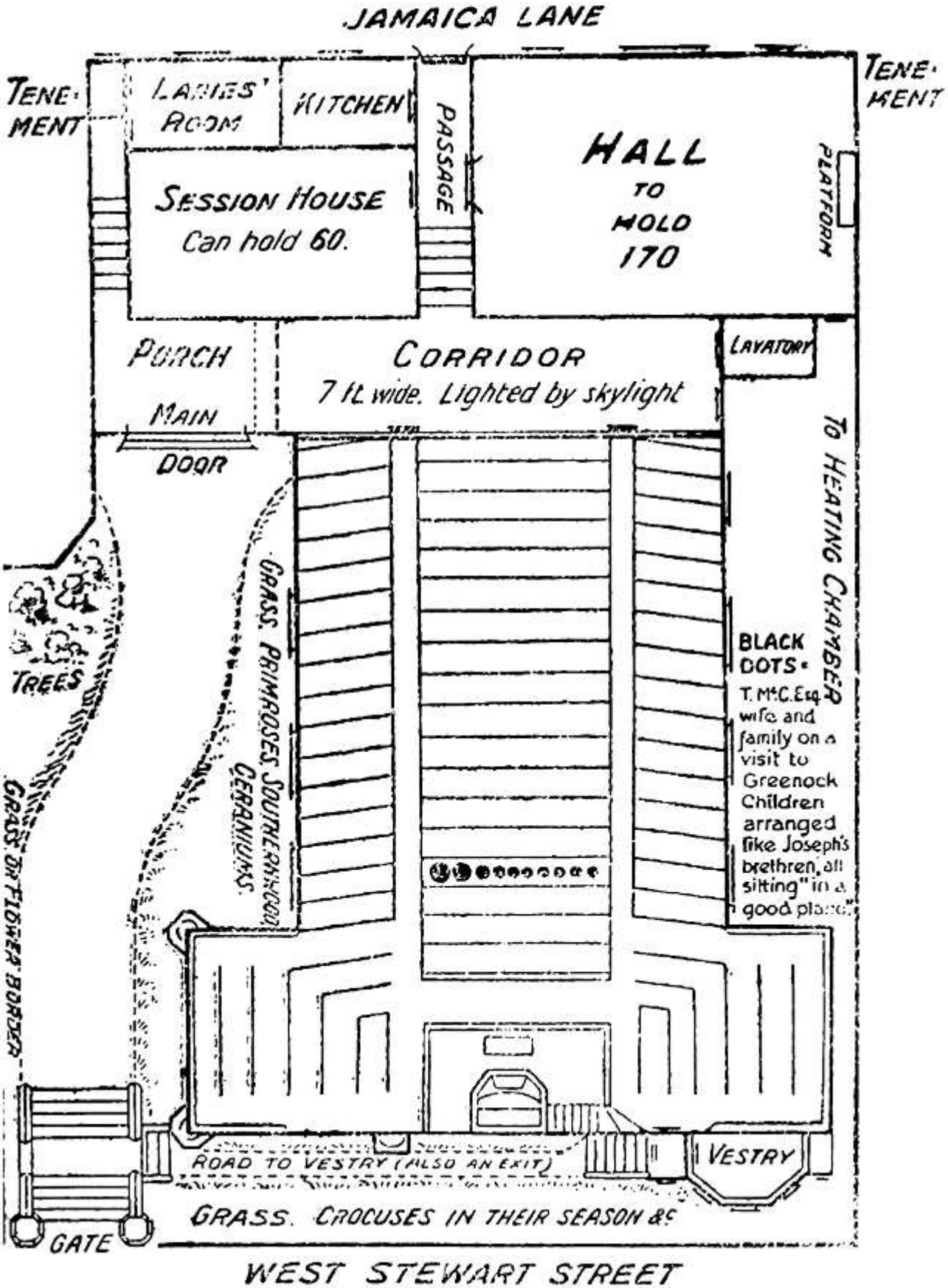
(*Who had written for particulars of the new church.*)

GREENOCK, *Feb.* 1896.

MY DEAR TOM,—The church itself is all built and slated; vestry half-way up; halls, etc., just begun. Plasterers begin this week. We had a long spell of dry weather, and then a month of torrents. All inside the black line is ours. The door of the porch is Gothic: six feet wide. Folding seats along the walls at the transepts. Passages are too narrow in the drawing. Explanation of diagram to suit the weakest capacity (specially prepared for T. M'C.).

The church is situated in Greenock, well known for its abundant fresh-water supply. The principles of the Church are more easily professed than practised. The pastor is well up in years, but in nothing else. There will be seats for four hundred and sixty people, if these four hundred and sixty can be got. Forty of these are folding seats, and will be let down, or rather opened out, if there should ever be occasion for it. They will be used when T. M'C. gives a lecture on—'How I missed the Presidency of the U.S.A., and how an inferior man got it.' Seventeen seats in the cent*er* (see how I accommodate myself to your New World prejudices), each holding nine; side seats hold five each.

There are three windows in the back of the church, ten to twelve feet high, and two very handsome ones above the



pulpit, to the right and left of it: Gothic, the top part, I mean the tracery, being different in each. That is our

only bit of extravagance, and was paid for by a member who saw the architect had set his heart on it. The church is sixty feet nine inches by thirty-six feet or thirty-seven at the narrow bit, and fifty at the transepts. We made transepts just to have little corners for the children on a Communion day as we have no gallery, and we wished them to see the Communion. There will be a pulpit, shape not fixed on. No precentor's desk; only a chair. Will that suit you? Gas brackets only for the walls. The floor rises three feet from the platform, so that the people will all have the inestimable privilege of seeing the minister if they wish to, each seat rising above the other. We took advantage of the natural slope of the ground. We wished also to avoid excavating. There are no free coups near here, and if we had entered direct from the street (which in many ways would have been better) we would have had at least £100 more to pay for taking away earth. We wished the halls and church also to be connected as immediately as possible. The roof has curved girders; roof, plaster—straw-coloured; walls, terra-cotta. Plaster is cheaper than wood-lining, and there is less chance of an echo. Slates, blue; green would have been three times dearer. The vestry is ten feet by seven. There is one brick arch, to be plastered over, over each transept. Church is of red sandstone from Skelmorlie. The transept should be a good bit broader, that is looking from the pulpit down the church. I have been much hurried, and have not drawn the plan [1] very accurately to scale. Heating apparatus (hot-water pipes) is under transept, near the vestry. There will be an egress by the narrow way in front that leads to the vestry. The minister, if he has no conscience, will get in without contributing to the collection, but it will be the worse for him. All the windows will be arched, with little squares of tinted cathedral glass. I think if we had it to do over again, we would stick by our old site, cramped though it was. Remember me kindly to Mrs. M'Cracken and your family, though 'remember' is hardly the right word.—Yours ever, J. P. S.

[1] This plan was enclosed in the letter.

To the same [1]

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Feb. 27, 1896.

MY DEAR TOM,—I have visitors, and am as busy as can be, and this is meant only for a receipt. Did you mean £50, or £5, or $5 ? The Bank people read it FIFTY POUNDS, and paid that ; but I can't believe my eyes. Five pounds would have been most handsome. Fifty pounds is shameless extravagance. I shall tell the congregation on Sabbath. I have written to tell your brother, and also Mr. Wylie, what you have done. Mr. Wylie sent me £50 two weeks ago. So your family have done gloriously. But you 'll have to give Mrs. M'Cracken a new dress when you can afford to be so lavish. It *is* good of you and of your wife, and I am very, very proud and grateful. The words written on our Balance Sheet—'Stipend postponed'—mean this: Our people have always paid me my six months' salary in advance. So they were really £100 richer than they thought. I don't like to be paid that way, and I asked them not to pay me the next £100 till it had been earned, at end of December. The £100 thus set free was voted to the Building Fund. 'Stipend postponed' is not a good name for it. But it was a stroke of financial genius worthy of a M'Kinley and a stroke of honesty worthy of a —— minister.

I was vexed to hear of Robert's death. There was a gentleness and kindliness about him that I cannot forget. It 's only yesterday since we were all boys together. To-morrow, or the day after, I hope we shall be equal to the angels.

Remember me very dutifully to Mrs. M'Cracken and your family.

Your letter was every way very delightful. Written in much haste and affection by yours,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

[1] Mr. M'Cracken had generously contributed £50 towards the new church.

To Dr. Denney

May 1896.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—I want you to tell me the worst and the best you can about 'The National Covenants of Scotland'! They have been called 'Covenants with death and hell.' What do you say to that criticism? I fancy no man ever made even a personal covenant—or came to Christ at all—without as much sin in the act as might condemn him.

Our kirk has turned out much more satisfactorily than I could ever have thought. That checry word of yours was prophetic. Now remember you owe something to your Covenanting blood—so give me some weighty sentences. They 'll be laid out at usury.—Yours,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

P.S.—By the way, Grant and I are both hurt at your saying that Whyte and Smellie were the two humblest men you ever met. Neither of us has got over it yet.

To the same

GREENOCK, *Aug.* 21, 1896.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—You have been good to me this last week. The acoustics on Sabbath seemed to be first-rate. The building, at twenty inches per seat, holds four hundred and sixty or so: we had over seven hundred in it; one hundred more in the corridor and stair leading up to Jamaica Lane, and twenty in my little room, which you remember, is at the right hand of the pulpit, and faces West Stewart Street. We could not have had a more lovely day. Our collection, £114, cleared everything, and a few pounds over. Last evening (prayer-meeting) the house was well filled; almost full—I mean its legal capacity. The American who preached on Sabbath spoke again, myself saying only a few words, and we were both heard perfectly. It was a great concern to me; and yet I often felt cheered as I remembered what you said last year when I was downcast about our entrance. We have

the incandescent light. Our varnish rather came off the seats, to the great dismay of the painter. That was the only drawback. Three baptisms, too, and the babies behaved splendidly, and their names gave me handles for a few remarks. My little room is very pretty. You must come and admire it. As the American spoke last evening, I did not need to. He has also agreed to preach on Sabbath.

I shall obey you and begin Judges. I was afraid I had been too long on that tack. A man said to Grant lately, 'They seem to be always at the Old Testament in that church—more of the Old Testament than the Gospel spirit.' And one of my people said to me lately, in reply to some harmless jest I made, 'You mustn't speak ill of the Old Testament.' I certainly am free from that sin.

I have not had time this week to read any of the sermons, but it is to be my first recreation; and I say that with a good conscience and a glad heart. As to last Sabbath I was so excited that I did not say what I meant to say: but I enjoyed the baptisms. I wonder you never tried Joshua: it 's full of God's love.

My Yankee friends start in the *City of Rome* in an hour and three-quarters. The sea is nothing to you, but Horace and I would have agreed. Kindest regards to Mrs. Denney. —Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. E. F. H. Capey

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Aug. 27, 1896.

DEAR SIR,—I am ashamed when I look at the date on your letter, and such a kind letter too—as kind a one as ever I got. Yet I know you will make some allowance for me, and perhaps forgive me altogether, when I tell you that I had three weeks of American visitors, and that it is only ten days ago that we opened our new church here. I have been very busy, and very anxious and very stupid over it all. I am sorry that I cannot give you at present any information about Hepburn of Urr, but I will try to find out something, and if I succeed it will be a great pleasure

to me to let you know. I thank you again for your cheering words. It was good of you to write me as you did.—I am, dear sir, yours gratefully and penitently,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. J. Rutherford

(*Presbyterian minister in the south of England.*)

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Dec. 18, 1896.

MY DEAR RUTHERFORD,—Many, many thanks for your delightful little book. We have a monthly prayer-meeting for missions in our church. I read the first paper through at our last meeting, and we 'll go through it all. I send you my 'brass for your gold.' Remember me very dutifully and kindly to Mrs. Rutherford and the young giants and giantesses. I hope you have a lot of sunshine, no day altogether dark.

I fancy we in the north have no idea of the battle you have to fight in the south. But it is in the high places that glory is to be got. . . .

All good go with you.—Yours gratefully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Dr. Denney

52 ELDON ST., *Dec.* 30, 1896.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—Thanks for your kind letter and your texts. As for Barrie's book on his mother, I hardly know what to say. It 's clever, and it 's solemn in parts, very solemn ; but it was risky. Grant says he can imagine she would not be over-popular with her neighbours. And there are elements of smallness in her—such small smallnesses, too, that they are big defects. I can't make up my mind. Only I 'm glad he wrote it. *Sentimental Tommy* I like, with the exception of some parts. I think it is very powerful. I read it all at the House of Refuge. I gave three such roars for Barrie at the Edinburgh Stevenson meeting that I was hoarse for two hours after. There

were no such roars in Edinburgh that day either for him or anybody else. . . .

To the same

Dec. 30, 1896.

. . . It seems absurd to suggest texts to you.[1] Where is Mrs. Denney? Yet to show you I 'm not lazy, and to give you a chance of saying to your wife, 'Yours are better after all,'—here goes! 'Is there any word from the Lord? And Jeremiah said, There is.' (Very small event—so little I did not use it for the *Watch*: 1st January 1797, Nelson wrote to his father from his ship *La Minerve* in the Mediterranean—'My dear father, on this day I am certain you will send me a letter.') 'All hail.' 'Peace be unto you.' 'Lovest thou Me?' 'Thou hast spoken of Thy servant for a great while to come.' 'The net full of great fishes' (three hundred and sixty and five!) 'The years that the cankerworm hath eaten.' 'Thou knowest my wanderings.' 'It is not for you to know the times and the seasons.' 'Expecting'—(Heb. x. 13. That 's a good one.) 'The trumpet shall sound.' 'Neither things present, *nor things to come.*' . . .

To the same

Oct. 26, 1897.

. . . Did I tell you a curious coincidence about Hebrews xii.? In a church hall I picked up from the floor a loose leaf—Hebrews xi. and xii. Seeing a Bible near, I opened it, and, finding that chapter awanting, stuck it in. Seeing another loose leaf, I examined it—it was the same chapters. In Liverpool I was asked to conduct family worship. 'We are reading Hebrews xii.' I turned it up—found that leaf had been torn through the middle—one half awanting. There is no new sect of scholars, is there, waging war against the chapter, 'in which every verse is a hero's monument,' as an American Pan-Presbyterian said? . . .

[1] For the first Sabbath of a New Year.

To the Rev. Alexander Smellie [1]

GREENOCK, 1898.

DEAR SMELLIE,—This article has been written in great haste, and you are to use an editor's power to the very utmost with it. I don't know whether it is worth printing or not. It may be wrong doctrinally, or it may be the merest commonplace. Please judge honestly, and if you think it is not worth printing from any cause, destroy it. I rely on your candour. I was writing it when your two books came. I have but a few minutes to catch the post, and you will be getting anxious, but I have seen enough to make me horribly jealous. Title, subjects, everything, most beautiful. And the volume of your magazine is a rare treasure. My work is poor stuff compared to yours. *Grace Abounding* is a charming book—I mean your edition of it. You 'll be one of Bunyan's companions. You are sure to be remembered in days to come.—Yours full of hatred and envy, J. P. S.

To the same

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
July 29, 1898.

MY DEAR SMELLIE,—The 'cheque' has put me in a difficulty. My first, second, and third impulse was to return it in whole; my fourth and fifth is to take a third of it, £2, 10s.; yet in taking so much I don't feel over-happy. The thought of money never entered my mind for a moment. I can truly say I wrote for you out of personal goodwill and gratitude to you, and I did it the more willingly—or rather the less unwillingly!—because I thought the society had been losing money. Are you quite sure it is a wealthy corporation? Now that raises another question. If it can afford to give me so much for twelve articles, it could

[1] At this time Mr. Smellie was editor of the *Sunday School Teacher*, a magazine of the Sunday School Union. He asked J. P. S. to contribute some articles towards it, which he did, writing twelve under the title, 'Flowers in the Crannied Wall'—subjects chosen from what some might consider the less promising parts of the Old Testament.

give the same for six very short ones to distinguished men whose names would help you far more than mine conceivably could. There is no humility, mock or otherwise, in saying that my name can't help you at all. I would say, if your society has money to throw away on me, it would be a better business speculation—to take the higher view of it—to send a guinea or two guineas to a man with a big name, saying, 'A few lines on any subject, etc., etc.' If your society is rich—and it must be, to give me all that—it can get better value for its money. If it isn't, I should be grieved to take even £2, 10s. And I feel that, being a rich society, you should dispense with my services altogether next year. When there 's no plea of necessity, one of my great motives for helping you is gone. Of course, I am in your debt for what you wrote for me, but I can't and never will, be able to pay you in kind. I hope you understand me. Remember me very kindly to Mrs. Smellie.—Yours, nonplussed,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Dr. Denney

Oct. 25, 1898.

. . . I CLOSE in December number of the *Morning Watch* the articles on 'How old art Thou ?' [1] and purpose, if all is well, a series on Girls' Names—'What is thy Name ?' with short notices of famous or infamous holders of each. I mean to take up the names in alphabetical order. I have been gathering them for some time.

I hear you are an ideal professor—such a professor as never was—and I believe it. . . .

To the same

52 ELDON ST., *Nov.* 3, 1898.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—That was a rare letter you sent to me. Grant and I enjoyed it immensely. . . . I write the

[1] The series of articles entitled 'How old art Thou ?' began in 1890, and was continued every month, with but two exceptions, for nine years.

last of my 'Ages' to-day, and ought to write a grand passage now in the style of Gibbon. It really will be a great miss to me. How the 'Names' will turn out I don't know. I think they 'll be just like the 'Ages,' *mutatis mutandis*. If Mrs. Denney hears of any Abigail—I mean a woman named Abigail—I'll be delighted to make her acquaintance; or any person in or out of history about whom a pretty fact or saying could be told. . . .

I gave a so-called lecture on Samuel Johnson recently. The chairman, an old gentleman, said to me in the anteroom, 'Now, about yourself—I suppose I may say you are a well-known clergyman in——is it Greenock I was told? Eh?' You don't know the trial of being a nonentity.

Glad you are still preaching so much. Kindest regards to Mrs. Denney. I hope she jots down every fragment of your conversation, as they gather up the sweepings of a goldsmith's shop.—Yours, J. P. S.

To the Rev. Alexander Smellie

GREENOCK, *Nov.* 1898.

MY DEAR SMELLIE,—I hope I have not put you about by my delaying. I have had a good deal to do of late, and could not fix on a subject till yesterday. I hesitated a little between this one and the words about the leper's offering—'such as he can get,' on which I once preached on a Communion Sabbath evening. And this morning, after having fixed on 'Cursing the deaf,' I see Dr. Parker chose the other for his Jubilee text yesterday! I am afraid you will think my letter last week a little, or a good deal, unkind. But honestly, I have been several times this year in rather a tight corner with my work. It comes specially hard on me at Communion times when I can get no help. I am very thankful I have written these papers this last year; it has kept me from wasting some time perhaps, and my own barrel of meal has never been quite empty—though perilously near it often—after giving you a little sodden oatcake. My Communion months—March and September

—and the Synod month, May—are my hardest. The inside of my head has often been sore this year. Would you be content if I gave you four or five, or maybe—if you are very exorbitant, six papers, of any kind? I would rather not agree to one every month. It is not want of will, or want of gratitude—I can never forget the lovely articles you wrote for me [1]—but want of strength.

You have your own hands full enough, but you are young and better read, and have a freer gift, and you have got a wife! I've only a housekeeper who puts my papers out of order, and burns them because they are only half sheets, and written in pencil, and nobody need tell her that they are of any use!

I think a touch of your pen would have improved my articles occasionally; but probably you are jealous, and don't want them to be the best in your magazine. Will there be editing work in Heaven? I think so, and sometimes even hope so.—Yours, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Dr. Denney

GREENOCK, *April* 20, 1899.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—As it seems I am to be the master spirit of this enterprise,[2] the star that is to set the time to the greater stars in our southern dance, be it known therefore—that I have arranged to be away, if all is well, on the first Sabbath of June, the 4th of that month. I could therefore be from home from Monday, 29th May, to the Thursday of the following week. That would let us see Oxford play the Australians! Grant says we wish to see Oxford, but we believe in coincidences. I am sorry I have no other alternative Sabbath to offer. It is extremely good of Mrs. Denney and yourself to let me be of your party.

[1] Mr. Smellie wrote the two missionary series—'What the Missionaries are doing beyond the Seas,' and 'Day's at the Morn'—for the *Morning Watch*, vols. 1892 and 1893.

[2] In the early summer of 1899 Dr. and Mrs. Denney, Mr. and Mrs. Grant, of Greenock, and J. P. S. together paid a visit to Oxford and Cambridge.

That week will be my high-water mark of honour. Then quickly I shrink back to my native and permanent ooze. Finished Haggai at our meeting last evening. Rare texts in it. I like that one, 'I will make thee as a *signet*.' You 'll have to give us Bible readings night and morning on our travels. Summer session for G. and me. Each day's sun as the light of seven days.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mrs. Denney

GREENOCK, *July* 12, 1899.

MY DEAR MRS. DENNEY,—The accompanying volume I read in another shape two or three years ago. Something or other, while we were at Cambridge, reminded me of Stephen, who was said to be the most promising man of his time in England. As you would not have the gloves, I ordered this book; but, having glanced over it, am ashamed to send it. There 's a clever parody on Browning, and one or two other smartish but excessively youthful things. Howbeit, the book 's bought, and it takes all sorts to make a library, and there may be one or two days so hot that the fountains of your minds or the channels of your thoughts may even sink to the level of *lapsus calami*—though these should be days for deeper reading. One is sorry for a fellow who never came to his kingdom, and the book may touch your minds that way. I enjoyed my holiday beyond words, but I would enjoy it now far more if we all started again. Groundless anxieties kept me sometimes on the strain. I 'm that way even if I cross to Helensburgh to see a new friend. So to speak, we carried umbrellas and mackintoshes and leggings, and there never was a drop of rain. There never was a trip of which I can reproduce so many happy moments more distinctly, and I am indebted, as the bachelor of the party, to you more even than your own husband is. Thank you for all your kindnesses, and your last not the least.—Yours gratefully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. E. F. H. Capey

July 6, 1899.

DEAR MR. CAPEY,—The illustrations in the *Morning Watch* are not printed from blocks; they are drawn on lithographic paper, and then transferred to the stone. Indeed the whole magazine, type and pictures, is lithographed. The type is set up in the ordinary way, and then printed—leaving spaces for the pictures—with special ink on special paper and transferred to a large stone. Then the pictures are laid down in their places. After each issue is printed, type and pictures are washed off into oblivion! Cease to be! There has not been a single block used from beginning to end, and I am very sorry for your sake. You should have had as many as you wished if I had had them. Once or twice people have copied some of the little articles and printed them in other magazines, and I have often grieved that the pictures were not capable of being dealt with in the same way. I thank you for your most kind letter, and wish you all speed.[1] You 'll have some anxious hours, but, I am sure, more happy ones.—Yours most regretfully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. Alexander Smellie

(On the birth of his first child.)

July 18, 1899.

MY DEAR SMELLIE,—Your little daughter has been seldom out of my mind. Some of the best people I have known have had no children, and to me that seems to make a bigger difference between people than the absence of any other gift or faculty. You remember Carlyle's pathetic remark about his wife's 'wee arm chair in which no child of hers was ever to sit.' You have a bigger stake now in the world than ever you had before. In a child there are such awful possibilities both of good and evil. I know these

[1] Referring to the appointment of Mr. Capey by the Methodist New Connexion Conference to the editorship of *Young People*. From the year 1900 Mr. Capey and J. P. S. annually exchanged volumes.

things are never out of your own or your wife's thoughts, but I wish you to know that they are also in mine. I could write any amount in this strain. An old, old bachelor has his own thoughts pretty often. Grant rejoices in your happiness, and in the good reviewing your book is getting. I am ashamed of this little letter, but twenty pages would not hold all my prayers and thoughts for you and your wife and your little one.—Yours affectionately,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

Aug. 1899.

. . . IT must be a great thought leaving your wife and little daughter.[1] I trust they both keep well, and that your little one is already growing in grace and in favour with God and man. All good go with you. You 'll be in a dreadful hurry getting things ready—specially your *Teacher* off your hands. You manage it—or almost all of it!—splendidly.

Once more, a good voyage, and may the star go before you.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Dr. Denney

(*Who had agreed to conduct the Wednesday evening service when J. P. S. was absent.*)

GREENOCK, *August* 21, 1899.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—How can I thank you enough for your great goodness to me?

You will find your way easily to our church, and may go in either by the front door, or by the side door which leads direct to the little birdcage-like room. No beadle will come for you, and you will just go on to the platform when it pleases you. There 's a Revised Version on the table. I have not told my congregation you are coming, so that there may be a special reward to the faithful attenders. Yet I would have liked to advertise it, but I won't.

[1] Mr. Smellie was starting to do Church deputation work in Canada and the United States.

I know you will highly exalt Christ.

You must tell me the name of some book you would like as a little memento. And may God bless you and my people on Wednesday. You 'll never be out of my thoughts, and I 'll follow you on the clock when the time comes.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. R. S. Allan

1899.

MY DEAR BOB,— . . . Have your children been allowed to make snowballs ? Three little girls begged me yesterday to come out for a snowballing. I put on the shooting cap you gave me and fought nobly. . . . I thought long ago your people had a private recipe for kind acts. Your wife must have one, too. You will both be saints with rare nimbuses, $1\frac{3}{4}$ ft. in diameter (ordinary saints' size being 14 inches). . . . —Yours invigorated, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Dr. Denney

(Who had asked what texts J. P. S. had preached on lately.)

. . . I 'M getting through 2 Thess. now ; in a way I have no reason to be proud of. I 'm longing for your book on it. As for texts, last Sabbath I talked on the blessings of forgetfulness—how God overrules it as He does all the other curses of the Fall, and makes it a fountain of graces (metaphor mixed). 'When thou forgettest a sheaf' (and the poor, too ![1]), etc. It 's a fine subject, as you must see. I tell you no more that you may penetrate the forest yourself. I liked 'the day of the Lord' in 1 Thess. Compare all the days so called. Christ's wrath seen even in the death of the believer—the corruption of the body, the helplessness etc. ; seen in the devil's discomfiture. 'Was not, for God took him.' Elisha's chamber—one of the few 'interiors' in the Bible—contrasted with God's chamber, the Holy of Holies ; Solomon's palace and bed ; and his own account of them in Ecclesiastes (I am not up in the New Criticism) ; with Christ's 'hath not where to lay His head,' and with

[1] See article following this letter.

the 'many mansions'—no candle, no footstools there, no doors to shut. Did you ever preach on—'Rabbi, where dwellest thou?' 'Come and see.' 'They went therefore' —Christ's way of inviting people—'Come and see.' He didn't give His card. How near Judas was to Heaven—'I have sinned.' Just what the prodigal son said. As near Heaven as man ever was. The three times it is said of Nicodemus he 'came by night'—almost lost his crown, and yet had been the first to hear the whole story of God's love. The Spirit a dove, and yet a flaming fire. 'Quench not'—how tenderly He rebukes us—saves our character in the eyes of men. I hope some of these will take a grip of you. I should like to share your honours. Did you ever preach on—'They passed on through one street, *and forthwith the angel left him*'? Ever preach on the reason for holding up the hands in blessing? 'And after fifty years they shall serve no more.' 'Through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through'—Bible lacking bits of Genesis through lack of gum and a little attention. . . .

The text, 'When thou forgettest a sheaf,' mentioned in the letter preceding, must have suggested the story of 'The Forgotten Sheaf,' which appeared in the *Morning Watch*, October 1899, and is here reproduced:

THE FORGOTTEN SHEAF

The sheaves of wheat, as they leaned on one another in loving embrace, in the stooks that stood in golden rows, were very full of joy one glorious autumn afternoon. Each stalk of grain had been looking forward, at once with hope and fear, to that harvest day. For many a long week the seed had lain as it were in the grave, in the cold and dark, cast out of the land of the living. Then it seemed to rot, as though it would become a thing of shame. And yet it was only its covering, its garment, that rotted away, and even that only when it had served its purpose. Then came the sense of life and the desire to live, and the seed pushed upwards and downwards with all its might. And what a

great day that was when the little green blade thrust its head into the open air and saw the sun and sky! But that was a short-lived joy, for when a few hours were past, the sun disappeared, and all was dark again, and the rain fell and the chilly winds blew, and the poor little plant wished it could creep back under the ground again. With the morning its courage revived, and with the second night it fell again. A whole week had passed before it knew that night and day were the ordinance of God. Yet, as the stalk grew, one trial followed another. There were dry east winds and bitter rains, fierce heats and nipping frosts. There were rumours abroad of worms and flies, mildew and rust. The stalks had survived through all, and with the summer days came strength and beauty. Each plant took notice of its neighbour's loveliness, and could scarce believe its ears—and they were rich in ears—when it heard of the splendour of its own rare colouring, the green, the touch of blue, the deepening yellow and golden red.

Then came one other trial to the field of corn, the last but not the least. When it was fully ripe, there came three days of rain. It looked as if all the pain and suffering and fear, the striving and the growing and the beauty, were to end in nought. But that fear passed away, for the rain clouds disappeared, and the sky was clear once more and a drying wind blew steadily.

Yet I must say, a great awe fell on the stalks when they saw the reaping-machine and heard the rattle of its knives, and watched their fellows fall headlong in broad swathes. 'Would the knives hurt much? Was it a painful thing to die?'

And now it was all past! The pain was over before it was felt, and the stalks had been gathered and lifted up and bound into sheaves by the strong and skilful arms of singing men and women. Now, as they stood gathered into stooks, shocks of corn fully ripe, they were filled with glad surprise and knew not what to say. They could do nothing but embrace. This was the joy of harvest.

And yet they knew they were only at the beginning of the work they had been sent into the world to do. The past was all preliminary. They were to become bread for the use of man, and how much that meant they could hardly even guess. Stacking, threshing, grinding, baking, firing, eating—all these processes were to be gone through before they could fulfil their destiny. When three days were passed the farmer and all his hands began to 'lead,' working each day as long as the light served. The fourth day saw the leading finished, and the fields cleared—all but one sheaf! During the afternoon the farmer's little grandson, who had been running about all day, had fallen asleep, and one of the workers had taken a sheaf and laid it for a pillow for the little laddie, in a corner of the field where a hedge sheltered him from the sun. Waking after a time, he ran back amongst the workers, and rode in triumph on the top of the last load home. But the poor sheaf was left lying all alone, and utterly forgotten. It had been very proud at being singled out to make a pillow for the child; now it paid dearly for the honour. It could see far off the tops of the stacks in the steading; it could hear the merrymaking of the harvest-home; but there was no more that it could do. A little girl came on it by chance next day and tried to lift it, but became frightened, and laid it down again. A minister, going home from visiting, looked at it for a moment, and, hardly knowing he had looked at it, passed on and went his way. And then the weather broke again.

The stalks of corn were greatly downcast, and talked far on into the night with one another. Next day was fair, and hope revived. The God Who had done so much for them would do still more! He had delivered them in six troubles; surely in the seventh no evil would touch them. And so it was, but the answer to their prayers was not quite such as they had hoped for. Deliverance came to them by the mouth, ay, by the very jawbone of an ass. There was an old woman who travelled that part of the country selling dishes. Her donkey had cost her twelve-

and-threepence, with three cups and saucers, blue with gold edges, thrown into the bargain. Poor Neddy was very thin, his ribs so manifest and palpable that an engineer had called him a lattice-girder. His mistress, noticing the sheaf, crept into the field and, having fetched it out, put it in her cart. That night and next day Neddy had such a supper and breakfast as he had not had for long, and was so overjoyed that he lay four times down on his back, and rolled from side to side with his legs in the air, praising and blessing God. From that day his health and the fortunes of his mistress steadily improved. It was another kind of destiny the sheaf had hoped for, but it could hardly have had a better. To make a poor donkey happy is to do a fine work for God.

But that was not all. On the Friday of that week, the minister of whom I spoke, being in perplexity for a text for the Sabbath afternoon—he had read through two Gospels and four Epistles without finding one—had turned back to Deuteronomy, and there, lighting on the twenty-fourth chapter, a very beautiful one, read these words, 'When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.' Then he remembered the sheaf he had seen lying in the field, and in one moment he saw he had got his text from God. There were some people, of course, who didn't like the sermon. They didn't wish to like it, and they got their heart's desire. But there were some others who got great good from it, and were made better men and women. One man, a church-goer for forty years, was struck with the tenderness of God. He had a vague idea that Christ loved us, but he had always understood that God the Father, if He did not actually hate men, would have done so if His Son had not compelled Him to yield a little by offering to die for us. The thought that *God* loved the world, and *so* loved the world, was a great discovery to him, and made that day *the* day of his life.

Another man in the congregation, whose favourite text was, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost,' saw, for the first time, that meanness was as hateful to God as waste. And a third man, who read all the high-class magazines, and understood that the God of the Jews cared nothing for the heathen and thirsted only for their blood, had his eyes opened, too, and saw that all through the Old Testament the God of Israel was the Stranger's God. And a poor woman, whose husband was but four weeks dead, went home with her three little ones, upborne by the words—'for the fatherless.' Another widow, anxious about her boy in London, felt glad at the thought that there was bread enough and to spare in her Father's house. And still another, who was greatly put about because her memory was failing and she was always forgetting things, was cheered by the thought that God has uses even for our forgetfulness. And a shopkeeper, who had once lost a five-pound note when on a visit to Dundee, and had never ceased blaming his wife for not having discovered and mended the hole in his pocket, came home ashamed that afternoon, and told her—she was in ill-health and unable to go to church—that he had got some light on the money he had lost four years ago. For the minister had been saying that sometimes, when we lost things, it was only God that had borrowed them for some purpose we didn't know. The money in the fish's mouth was money, perhaps, that some one was annoyed at losing. Yet God had made the man lose it, because our Lord had to pay the tribute, and had no money of His own; and the man would get a blessing for it, because he would have been only too glad to give it to our Lord if he had known that the Lord had need of it. 'And what you and I should have done, good wife, was this—we should have prayed that God would let somebody find the money that needed it; I did very wrong in blaming you, so now I forgive you!'

Perhaps I have told you enough about that sermon, but let me tell you one thing more. There was a lad there that day, a newcomer to the town, who had given up going

to church, and hadn't opened his Bible for months. I don't know what brought him there, except that it was the doing of the Lord. Two things struck him. First, the fact that there were so many things in the Bible that were really *interesting*, that had something to do with one's daily life. And secondly, he saw a little boy of seven listening so attentively that he said, 'There must be some good people in this church. I must come back again.' And come back he did, not only on Sabbaths, but to the prayer-meeting on Wednesdays as well. He began to read his Bible, too, and the Bible brought him to Christ. Years after, when he went to Calcutta, he told his new minister there about the text that first made him think about eternal things. And the minister there took to the text also, and preached a far abler sermon from it than the one I have told you about, and a ship captain who was there spoke about it afterwards in Melbourne, and I can't tell you how many sermons since then have been preached on 'The Forgotten Sheaf.' It seems to me, that while none of the sheaves were forgotten before God, but prospered in the thing whereto He sent them, it was the forgotten sheaf that was remembered most. The others brought forth, some thirty, some sixty, but *it* brought forth an hundred-fold.

CHAPTER XIII

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER-DIARY

1898–1901

'Every one knows that this new religion [Christianity], sprung of so humble a beginning, has had force enough, somehow, to take the rule of human society for the last eighteen hundred years. Ancient learning, ancient customs, and religions, emigrations, wars and diplomacies, all the foundations of thrones and the bulwarks of empire have floated, as straws, on this flood.'—HORACE BUSHNELL.

Monday.—I was talking yesterday about the old prophet of Bethel who told the lie, and I am quite in love with him! When he saw what he had done, and was told that the ass and the carcase were still there and the lion waiting, he must have felt the lion was waiting for him. Yet he went out, owning his sin, with his life in his hand; then he carried the body through the town and buried it honourably, and set up the inscription that told of his own sin and the prophet's honour. I feel as if I had found a new star in my firmament. He was like Samson, doing his duty at the last at the risk of his own life—a man who had been living in sin, disowned by God, and wist not that the Lord was departed from him. The prohibition to eat food, in the old prophet's case, could only be done away as solemnly as it had been laid on him. In difficulties let us allow God to open the door for us, and Him only.

Monday, May 2, 1898.—I had to walk hard into Edinburgh on Saturday—trains late—got home at 9.30; worked at my sermons till after twelve, went to bed, but was kept awake till nearly five by a drunk man outside. I had to get up and dress. I lay ready in case he should

come to the door, which he did. Thought he was in Paisley. I spread two mats for him—a tall young chap. When he lay down, he fortunately lay with his left side up and exposed a big, flat bottle full of whisky, which I took from him, and now have locked in a cupboard. *I was tired* yesterday. Got a letter from some fellow in Ireland asking me to write in 'my own graphic style' an account of Drumclog and let him have it by to-morrow morning! He had undertaken to write a paper for a society on the 'Battlefields of the Covenanters.' I copied out in pencil about thirty pages from an old book and sent them off, telling him he had given me an impossible task.

June 27, 1898.—I wrote to-day declining the proposal that I should write a Children's Bible. I really have enough to do with the *Watch*, and I don't see how I could tell the story simpler than it is.

I like a bit in Hosea to-night (Wed.), where God seems just to like recalling the facts of Jacob's life (chap. xii.): 'Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.' George A. Smith says in his commentary that he simply can't trace the argument. I think it is God going back over history the way any mother would, as if she might say—'Ay, he was five years at school, and I got him apprenticed.' And it should be very dear to any one who has been kept waiting for some desire to be fulfilled. God keeps note of the time, and every day to Him is as a thousand years.

Saturday, July 9, 1898.—The sea to-day was as smooth as glass. The boats well filled. A lady has been sitting for hours gazing at the water—young, but grey-haired. I'm sorry for all lonely women on holiday.

Sabbath, July 10.—An ideal summer day. I'm preaching very badly just now. My brain quite empty.

September 16, 1898.—Was at the Poorhouse to-day seeing a woman who used to be in the House of Refuge, Kate Mullen—a wild woman she used to be. Had been over a

hundred times in jail. She was in the House of Refuge for some years and then her mind gave way. She is dying.

September 20, 1898.— . . . On my way I saw a gentleman very drunk. I saw him twice last week drunk. He used to nod to me when he drove past, but I never knew who he was. He stopped me last night—seemed to be in the horrors ; asked me to take his arm, and I went with him to his house. The door was on the 'sneck,' lobby dark—no one to receive him. He has a wife, four girls and four boys, as he assured me repeatedly on oath as we walked along the road. He was noisy at times—then couldn't make out who I was—begged my pardon for swearing, and insisted on my coming into his house. Of course I didn't, but I 'll try to see him.

Saturday, October 8, 1898.—I have got a fine text for to-morrow afternoon: 'For in that she poured this ointment upon My body, *she did it to prepare Me for burial'* (R.V.). That 's far stronger than the Authorised Version. I have enjoyed thinking over it. One is apt to think that Christ, so to speak, found out a use for what Mary did, to please her ; just as when a mother gets a useless box as a gift from her child, she says it will do nicely for holding stamps or buttons. But the ointment really prepared His body—was necessary to it. (1) It brought about His death. For the loss of the £10 angered Judas so much that it determined him finally to sell Christ. (2) It refreshed Christ's body for all the suffering of that week. It was the finest ointment, and must have had particularly refreshing aromatic power. (3) The richness of its perfume, as well as His look and manner, fitted Him to appear next day during the triumphal entry, and later, before Pilate and Herod, as a *King*. 'Art thou a King?' 'Behold, your King!' (4) It was partly the means of preserving His body from corruption in the grave. (5) Then think of the effect on His Spirit : (*a*) It made Him face the King of Terrors all the more vividly. Even when alive He was prepared for burial. (*b*) It cheered Him as an evidence of a saved

sinner's love—the very thing He died for. (*c*) It was an assurance of God's love. Death was in a sense already conquered. His body was being prepared to be kept from corruption, and so it was a proof of the nearness of the resurrection.

Nov. 4, 1898.—That lad in our congregation—M.A., M.D.—fine fellow—who is offering himself as a missionary, can't get an opening in the Free Church. They seem to have more men than they have money for. One almost wonders if one should not give up great part of what one has oneself. To lay past is to prepare for uncertain uncertainties. Wouldn't it be better to trust God—a little ?

I made up an astronomical diagram for D. S. : the sun a four-shilling piece with a great red corona round it ; Saturn a shilling—with an indiarubber band round it ; Jupiter a two-shilling bit ; the earth a sixpence, with a threepenny bit for moon. I fastened them with coloured strings on cardboard. Mercury had a red ribbon across it. Then I drew a few of the constellations—black, with red ink round them, and bored holes. When you looked through the cardboard (two feet by one) at the fire the constellations twinkled ! It took me two and a half hours or so, and looked splendid. It really was ingenious, and yet I have an article to write for Smellie and I can't get any ideas.

On Monday I was at a Christmas dinner in a girls' home, and did a lot of carving. In the evening at the Infirmary. I put on my dress clothes to honour them. Three doctors there, one outside lady, and about thirty nurses. I had a turkey to carve. After dinner we went to the nurses' sitting-room and had music and singing ; then, after a little, all kinds of dances. I saw more dancing than in all my previous life.

Jan. 25, 1899.—Seventeen years all but a few minutes since I was inducted here. How young we were then ! What a lot one has to be thankful for, and how much to be

ashamed of! 'Deliver me, O God, from bloodguiltiness,' for Christ's sake. Amen.

In that matter of carrying bundles for people G. is utterly wrong, and I hope to carry bundles for people as long as I live. I often carry my own scuttle of coals up to my room, but I would do that for anybody. I do it for women when I 'm visiting and meet them on the stairs. It 's a sore task for a woman, and no gentleman could let a woman do it. Poor people get their coal put in cellars in the low flat, and it 's a big lift to take them up three stairs.

Lest my congregation refuse to support our missionary,[1] I 'm saving every halfpenny I can. If I can deliver a letter instead of posting it I do so, and put the money past in a box. We have our meeting of deacons to-night to think over the missionary proposal, and I am a little anxious. . . . At our Deacons' Court, three deacons opposed paying a missionary who was to be under F.C. jurisdiction. Several were absent who would have been friendly. The other seven who were there were most hearty; especially two (one of whom I was afraid of) spoke very kindly, said it was Christ's work whether it was F.C. or any other Church, and we should be pleased to have a hand in it. Now it has to go before the congregation.

Oct. 21, 1899.—The Allan liner *Mongolian*, transport 17, has just passed, full of kilties, all in their khaki clothing.[2] It was very touching to see the *Benbow* men line up and cheer them. The sound came through the air like anything. It made a lump come to one's throat. I do think our nation needs a humbling, and yet no nation has done such work for God. For the sake of our missionaries I think the victory will be ours at the end.

[1] Dr. Margaret M'Neil, a member of J. P. S.'s congregation, had offered her services as a medical missionary to the Board of the Women's Foreign Missions of the Free Church of Scotland, her way not being open in connection with the Foreign Mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. J. P. S. proposed to his congregation that they should undertake to provide her salary, which was happily carried out.

[2] The great Boer War was beginning.

Dec. 16, 1899.—Every day's news is worse than another's. I sent off a letter to the editor of our local paper suggesting that instead of, or, better still, in addition to, our usual congregational prayer-meetings on New Year's Day, there should be a public meeting of our townsfolk for prayer and humiliation before God. We do need to be humbled. We thought our Navy the one thing that made us impregnable, and it 's almost helpless. One has no heart to think of anything else. I 'm dreadfully down in the mouth about the war. But I do think God has a great work for Britain yet. The rod stretched over the Nile a week ago in the death of the Khalifa is a rod surely not to be withdrawn yet. God who has pardoned us hitherto will remember His Own Name and the memory of the godly dead in Africa.

I used to admire Bismarck, but his confession a few years ago that he doctored the telegram that made peace impossible in 1870 altered my view. But a politician has temptations.

I had to send £20 to a young lad—a nice fellow—whose health has given way and who is in great straits—people won't keep him free any longer. I have a great respect for him. It is not probable I shall ever get it back.

1899 is just passing away. O God, blot out all our sins and make 1900 a year of joy to Christ. We ask no more and no less. We commit ourselves and all our interests to Thee for time and for eternity, and if Thou honour Thy Son in us and by us we shall be content whether we get our own wishes or not.

Jan. 2, 1900.—Yesterday a busy day; church at eleven; fine meeting. 'An anchor within the veil, whither as Forerunner,' etc. Called on my brother; then a drill hall performance; then Infirmary; then dinner and carving at Working Boys' Home, on my way taking a bottle of whisky from four drunk lads; then Fever Hospital, only

two other visitors there—a F.C. elder and his wife; then to the train to see our doctor missionary off [1]—about thirty or forty there; then for seven and a half hours at House of Refuge—very few visitors there—singing and romping all the time.

Sabbath night, Jan. 14, 1900.—And a stormy one—and a great battle, they say, is raging at the Tugela. O God, go forth with our armies for Thine own name's sake, for we are called by Thy name. For the sake of those who have striven to win Africa for Christ, stir up Thy strength and might. For Thy Son's sake. Amen.

Feb. 24, 1900.—I think they liked to have me in the workshop.[2] They were all very kind. They saw the narrow high stool did not suit me, though I said nothing, and brought a lower one. It was quite a novel experience. I must have scraped about 2400 or 2500. It was pretty sore on one's eyes.

July 20, 1900.—Last Sabbath, as the congregation was dismissing, I saw a man come out of the front pew very like Dr. Oswald Dykes. I heard on Monday it was he. I don't know that he would care for my sermon. (Odd how one is put about by one stranger.) If I had seen him I would have asked him to say a few words to us. The text was Exod. xxxviii. 27. The tabernacle cost £160,000, and was built by free-will offerings, but the sockets on which the boards rested—costing £35,000—were levied by a 1s. 3d. tax on every Israelite over twenty years; so every man had a share in it by compulsion, and even in the veil's sockets. Each socket cost £350, and would weigh one hundredweight, and was beautifully made. I said we all helped to build up the house of God on earth and even in Heaven in many ways, but God wished us to have a sure place. 'I will make him that overcometh, a *pillar* in the

[1] Farewell to Dr. Margaret M'Neil.

[2] A printer's error, rather bad, had occurred in the *Morning Watch*, and was only discovered in time to correct a certain number by hand.

temple of my God.' We all have a name and place by birth, etc., but the sure abode must be got by fighting God's battles. The same lot who supplied the sockets—603,550—were also numbered as able to go forth to war, and yet although the 1s. 3d. tax was compulsory, the going forth to war was voluntary.

Oct. 24, 1900.—I was at the Fever Hospital to-day—four cases of typhus at present—a rare thing. I had seen them all before, also the wife of one of them, a good old man. She died, and the nurses wanted me to tell him. So I had to do it. They left orders that I was to wash my hands in Condy's Fluid before leaving. The old man thanked me kindly for seeing him. He said, 'Are you not afraid?' Then he said, 'It 's a poor soldier that won't follow his Captain.'

May 17, 1901.—I 'm going in to town with the last bit of MS. for the *Watch*. I 'll go into our new house on the way and I 'll take my mother's Bible with me as the first thing to go into it. 1.40.—In. And have prayed and commended you and me and all our concerns to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Our church has been asked to hold a meeting every Sabbath evening in a new lodging-house—two hundred beds, and we begin on Sabbath first. My addresses will be short, and a lot of our young folks will sing.[1]

Sabbath, May 19, 1901.—My last Sabbath here. My last Sabbath letter. A quiet, lovely night. If all is well I must be up early at the printers'. Don't abuse the *Watch* this time! I 've had a pretty hard job getting it ready in the middle of all this confusion. I enjoyed to-day very much. I am writing at my window, a window that is a door in heaven.[2] I look forward to this week with great

[1] J. P. S. continued this service until a few years before his death, the room in which it was held being required for enlarged sleeping accommodation.

[2] His study had a wide window on the roof of his house, from which there was a magnificent view. The house to which he removed had a less fine view, but it had a garden, which was a great joy.

anxiety. O Lord, undertake for me. For Christ's sake. Amen.

Thursday, 23rd.—I flitted to-day. Everything turned out well. I am just leaving the old house, and ask God to pardon all my sin committed here and to go with me. Grant called and is now upstairs. He prayed very solemnly and read from Peter.

August 1, 1901.—I am asked to supply Frognal Presbyterian Church, Hampstead, on either or both 22nd and 29th September. Am sorry I can't go. It is our Communion time. Have stopped going to cricket. Have not been at a match this year. I would have said a year ago that was impossible.

I wonder if we do right in laying past any money at all. It would take great faith to be willing to spend all one has on missions, yet the other world will be here very soon, and God could be trusted to provide for us in old age. I am guaranteeing to-day two years' salary to the London Missionary Society for —— ——'s salary. He gets £132 a year, so that is £264. Their Board meets on Monday, so I have to write at once. I just got particulars a few minutes ago. One has but one life to live, and it will so soon be past; and when one is old one won't need to have company. A quiet little corner would do us both.

Oct. 2, 1901.—To-morrow is our Fast Day. I got a chicken, a pot of jam, and a half-pound of butter from the Howies. That will be their last gift to me, as they all leave—ten of them—for a new farm near Arbroath in a week or two. I am very sorry they are going.

Nov. 1, 1901.—Paid my last visit to the Howies this evening. I often wished to take you there. They are all fine singers. On the way back, after seven, in the rain and dark, I passed a lot of people. Found out in the next house I went to that it was about twenty of our young folks going out to give them a surprise party. They had a gig with the provisions!

CHAPTER XIV

LECTURE: 'THE GOOD OLD TIMES'

'Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these?'—Ecclesiastes vii. 10.

QUITE early in his ministry my husband began to deliver lectures. He had pleasure in doing so, and he considered it was a means of doing good. He preferred to go to quiet out-of-the-way places, where the people had little to relieve the monotony of winter evenings. He never accepted a fee, and always—except in one or two cases when a railway ticket was thoughtfully sent him in advance—he paid his own expenses.

The lectures which seemed to be most enjoyed were those delivered without notes. He was very frequently asked to give one called 'Coincidences,' an account of strange happenings, many of them taken from his own experience. In delivering it he relied solely on a most retentive memory, and would continue his speech for an hour and a half, keeping his audience throughout on the verge of laughter or of tears.

That lecture, and some others, it is impossible to reproduce. In response to many urgent requests, that have come from far and near, one lecture—'The Good Old Times: A Story of a Week-end one Hundred Years Ago,' which was written out fully, is included in this volume, but it must be remembered it was written to be delivered, not to be printed, and those

who listened to it will read it, it is feared, with disappointment, while those who may only have heard of its popularity will have the same feeling in still greater degree. Even when preaching, my husband was not able to restrain some dramatic action, and the printed words without the personality of the man behind them, and without the accompaniment of a quite incommunicable expressiveness in look and tone and gesture, are inadequate to give the impression of the spoken words.

My husband's own account of his 'Story of a Week-End a Hundred Years Ago' may be given. Writing on 29th January 1902, he said :—

"I have to give a lecture to-morrow evening to our own Literary Society—'A Week-end in Scotland a hundred years ago'—a kind of narrative, but it has actually shaped itself into a novelette! It is a rather repulsive account of the disagreeable side of Scottish life of that time, showing the narrowness of *some* Scotch Seceders. Most of it is taken from what I heard as a child. And it is ready! Twenty-nine hours before the time!—which is something new and wonderful for me. Can a man really improve when he is old?"

Once or twice, after delivering the following lecture, my husband received a letter censuring him severely for holding up our Scottish forefathers to ridicule. But it should be noted that while two of his characters showing the narrowness of the views held by some at that time—and the facts were drawn from life—are hateful, the others, and especially the women, are almost all admirable. The object of the lecture is to show how greatly the manners and customs of our land have improved in the past century, and that it is a mistake to say that the old times were better.

LECTURE

THE GOOD OLD TIMES: A STORY OF A WEEK-END ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The time is between four and five o'clock on a Saturday morning, being Candlemas Day, 1800; and the scene is a thatched cottage in Anderston, Glasgow. Mrs. Buchanan, whose maiden name was Nicholas Vert, was the third wife of Peter Buchanan—third wife, and, as he often said both to her face and behind her back, the poorest of a poor lot, but he hoped to do better the next time if it was the will of Providence to take her away. Mrs. Buchanan on this morning was afraid she had overslept herself. There was no clock in the house, but her neighbour who lived downstairs, Mrs. Redpath, had one. That clock, however, laboured under several disadvantages. Like many others in those days it had no minute hand, only the hour hand, so that, to begin with, it needed a trained eye to tell the time within anything less than twelve minutes. But further: Mrs. Redpath kept three lodgers, and as they were each afraid of being late for work one of them put the clock an hour forward, the second put it half an hour forward, and the third fifty minutes forward, for the clock 'warned' at ten minutes to the hour. Mr. Redpath, to show that he was master in his own house, put it on as near as may be another quarter of an hour. These repeated advances brought several drawbacks with them. It made the telling of the time a process of private interpretation and a somewhat complicated arithmetical problem, but it had this priceless advantage—it gave the lodgers two hours and thirty-five minutes longer in bed. Instead of rising at a quarter-past five they could lie till ten minutes to eight, and be in time for their work at six.

Mrs. Redpath would have been only too happy to tell Mrs. Buchanan what o'clock it was, but her husband and Mrs. Buchanan's husband had quarrelled two years before, and the contention was so hot between them that they had

forbidden their wives to speak to one another—an injunction they obeyed most faithfully whenever their lords and masters were within sight or hearing. At such times, if they had occasion to pass one another, they did it with an ostentatious indifference to each other's presence that approached the sublime. But these brilliant flashes of silence only added to the enjoyment of the talks that began before their husbands were fifty yards away. The two women never idled—to be idle is a man's prerogative—they had ever some sewing or knitting, some mending or darning, to do, but they could do that and talk too; and, like all women, they had the marvellous gift of talking at full speed, and at the same time missing nothing that the other said—a gift that was but an anticipation of that wonder of our own times—the fact that several messages can be sent along one wire in both directions at one and the same time. The two women had much in common, and especially this—each had a husband who was tired of her, though the husbands showed it in different ways. But it is the Buchanans, and more particularly Mr. Buchanan, I wish to speak of. Had it been daylight, Peter Buchanan, being a 'by-ordinary' intelligent man, could have told the time by the shadow of the clothes-pole on the washing green. He was really good at this, and as there was either no clock to test his decisions by, or no clock whose decision he would accept if it disagreed with his, he got the credit of being able to tell the time within five minutes. If the sun was not shining, and if Mrs. Redpath's door was open, as it usually was to let out the smoke, he could see her clock from the middle of the little outside winding stair which led to his own door. He had been able to read the clock, he often boasted, since he had been twelve years of age. Mrs. Buchanan learnt it, not from him, but from Mrs. Redpath, and was so proud of having done so that it was no easy task for her to hide from her husband that she had eaten of this tree of knowledge. On this Candlemas morning Mrs. Buchanan was afraid she had 'slept in.' She had had a good deal to try her that week. There had

been two meetings of the Old Light Anti-Burgher Session over two cases of slander, and it had been midnight when her husband, who was Session Clerk, came home, bringing each time his chief cronie, Weelum Dickie, with him for supper. Besides these two meetings, his own house had been visited the night before by a special deputation of two members. Having had somewhat the worse in an argument with his wife on the previous Sabbath evening—he had been reading aloud *Marshall on Sanctification* for two hours, and she had asked him if he couldn't get the loan of a book of which she had heard, called *Pilgrim's Progress*, which she thought would interest the children more—they couldn't understand that book he was reading and neither could she—he had answered with a sneer in his voice, that a man was to be pitied who had joined himself in marriage to a woman that had about as much intelligence as one of her own hens; and she had retorted that it was strange that a man so intelligent as he brought less money into the house than either she or the hens, poor things, for one of them had laid seven eggs in ten days, and all he had done was to *eat* them—though, as she had already told Mrs. Redpath, she had kept three of them and put three she had found in a field in their place, and she jaloused they were none of the freshest. To pay her off for this retort he had conceived the brilliant idea of reporting her to the Session for non-attendance at public ordinances and for refusing to come to the weekly fellowship meeting held on alternate Thursdays in John King's and Thomas Borland's. The minister and Weelum Dickie had come accordingly on Friday evening and sternly rebuked her for her conduct, dwelling especially on the bad example she was setting, not only to her own two children, but to the others to whom in Providence she had been called to fill a mother's place. Further, she was dishonouring and grieving her godly husband, to whose heart the welfare of Zion lay very close. Mrs. Buchanan, who had her own thoughts, sat apparently unmoved, to the no small annoyance of her husband, who was sitting at the fireside with his hand over his eyes, peering through his

fingers to see how Nicholas would take it. The work of the deputation being over, she supplied them with 'refreshment' after the manner of that time; to provide which, she would have to deny herself food. Mr. Buchanan gave the minister and elder a long convoy, and on his return took the books for family worship. After singing the Psalm—

'In dwellings of the righteous
Is heard the melody
Of joy and health,'

to the tune Bangor, he read from Ephesians about the duties of wives to their husbands, 'waling a portion wi' judicious care'—his wife could not read—and carefully omitting the verses which touched on the duties of husbands to their wives. Then they knelt in prayer, and he, as often happened, fell asleep. When he awoke, he found that his wife had lain down. She had tidied the kitchen and put the children's clothes in front of the fire. Grieved at her heartless conduct, he went to the cupboard, took more 'refreshment,' and, putting off his vest and knee-breeches, and putting on his red woollen night-cap, lay down to rest, closing as tightly as he could the doors of the box-bed, and so fell over to sleep thinking of the degenerate times in which his lot had been cast.

It was customary in those days for a policeman or watchman—or a 'Charlie,' as he was called—to come along Anderston calling the hour—'Three o'clock,' 'Four o'clock,' and 'A fine frosty morning,' or 'A rainy morning,' as the case might be; but some young West-enders who lived in Millar Street, resolved on prolonging their evening festivities, having found the Charlie asleep, had overturned his sentry-box and left him helpless, yelling, underneath it. That is how it came to pass there was no Charlie and no proclamation of the hour in Anderston that morning. It was, of course, very dark when Mrs. Buchanan got up, but, putting on her shawl, she went out into the street—for little light even in the day-time could come through the two small green bottle-glass windows—and saw by the moon that it

could not be past four o'clock. Returning, she noticed, to her dismay, that her peat fire, which had never once ceased burning all the eight years of her married life, was out and the ashes cold. There were no matches in those days, nor for five and thirty years after, and she had no means of lighting a candle or kindling a fire. All she could do was to wait till the morning was further on, and borrow a live peat from some neighbour. The children, however, must get up. Beenie, aged eleven, and Bauldie—that is, Archibald—aged nine, her immediate predecessor's only surviving children, were employed, the one at a muslin factory, and the other at a Turkey-red dyer's. Beenie's wage was a sixpence a week—a big wage for a girl. Bauldie, whose hands and arms to the elbows had been a brilliant red ever since he had gone to the dyework two months before, was to get wages after a little, when the foreman saw how he got on. To Bauldie himself it was almost glory and wage enough to be stared at by the passers-by and to be envied by all other boys. Turkey-red dyeing had only been recently introduced into Glasgow by a Frenchman from Rouen. Mrs. Buchanan's own children, if I may make a distinction she never made or thought of making, were Leezbeth, aged seven, and a boy of six. Mrs. Buchanan herself was the only surviving child of Pringle Vert, a Haddingtonshire man of Huguenot extraction, who had been, like his father and grandfather, a slave all his life in the salt works at Prestonpans. He had died two months after his liberation in 1771.

When her little boy was born, Mrs. Buchanan had entreated her husband, as she had no kinsman left, to give her the naming of the child, and so keep up the name of the dead, that her coal might not be quenched. Pringle Vert Buchanan, she thought, would be a pretty name; she even felt that it had in it a sound and rhythm that presaged greatness. In answer her husband told her that it was a woman's place to obey, and to keep silence in the house of God. It was his right to name the child, and that duty he would discharge as he thought proper.

On the Saturday evening, to raise her hopes, and make the blow fall more heavily, he wrote on a slip of paper in her presence, 'Pringle Vert Buchanan,' muttering the words several times over to himself, but in an audible voice, and then in silence, as if making a fairer copy, he wrote on another slip the name he meant to give, 'Ebenezer Erskine Buchanan.' He put one slip in the left-hand pocket of his vest, and the other in the right, and then sitting at the fire, and using the palm of his hand as a razor-strop, he shaved himself, for he would have counted it a sin to shave on a Sabbath day; and, indeed, it was because he had heard that the minister had committed that sin on two separate occasions that he had left the Cameronian Church and became an Auld Light Anti-Burgher. Lest it should be thought I am too hard on this man, and can see no good in him, let me mention to his credit that, although he took half an hour to shave himself, he did it without a looking-glass, and he used cold water.

Next morning Mrs. Buchanan went to church in Phemie Todd's shawl and Mrs. Redpath's boots. The enormous white hood the baby wore was her own property. It had been worn by herself and her ten brothers and sisters in succession, and had come to her as the sole survivor. She was wonderful braw that day, and, although forty-five years of age, looked young, and was almost as happy as she had a right to be. I need not describe the baptism. Neither of the parents heard what the minister was saying. Mrs. Buchanan was praying, and Mr. Buchanan was enjoying in anticipation the look of chagrin his wife's face would wear when she heard the name announced—Ebenezer Erskine. In his awkwardness—he had been a family man for thirty years, but had done mighty little nursing—he lifted the baby on to the wrong arm and nearly let it fall, to the huge delight of the children who were standing on their seats in the gallery. Several women cried 'Oh!' Then came the solemn moment. Mr. Buchanan put his hand in his left-hand pocket and handed the slip to the minister, who, without opening it, pronounced the sacred

formula, and then, reading what was written, proclaimed with a loud voice, 'The child's name is Pringle Vert Buchanan.' Mr. Buchanan was a specialist in groans, but that day he surpassed himself. The groan he uttered was heard over all the church. To Weelum Dickie he said afterwards, 'I tried to correct the mistake I had made, but my tongue was parched, and I couldn't speak, Satan having the advantage over me'—which was true, though not in the sense he meant.

The matter came up at the Session a month after. 'Was it usual to give a child,' one of the members asked, 'two names?' He had been a member of the church six and forty years, and had never heard of such a thing before. To him it savoured of 'black Prelacy.' Others said it certainly was against all 'use and wont.' How far the discussion might have gone I do not know, but the minister was not in a good mood that evening. 'It certainly is not "use and wont,"' he said, 'to call a child Pringle Vert. No child of that name ever crossed the church door before, and, if it is like the other children of the family, it is not likely to cross it again.' So saying, he rose up and pronounced the benediction. But I have digressed too far.

Little Leezy and Pringle had been employed at a pin manufactory for the past two weeks, and as they were to get a fortnight's wages that Saturday evening, they had been rather putting on airs. Leezbeth had gone to work on the Monday, but four hares, that had been prancing about on their hind legs just at what is now the foot of Elderslie Street, had so frightened her—for you will remember she was only seven, and but a girl at that—that she had begged to be allowed to take Pringle with her for protection. To be frank, he was not a little afraid of the hares himself when he saw the monsters in the grey dawn, but what will a man not do who has a woman to protect? And though he trembled all over, he, like Mr. Barrie's Grizzel, 'didn't let on,' which, as you know, is the truest of all kinds of courage. When he appeared at the works on the Tuesday morning, the foreman looked at him, and

asked Leezbeth what he wanted. 'He thocht,' she said, 'you micht be needin' mair men, and so he cam'.' And so he stayed. In the making of a single pin, as doubtless you have heard, eighteen different operations were involved. One man drew out the wire, a second straightened it, a third cut it, and so on, and so on, the last operation being putting on the heads. It was this last job the little Buchanans were set to, and in this exhilarating occupation they had now put in almost twelve days. It was nearly five o'clock on this morning when the peat fire had gone out that these two little creatures, roused with difficulty, rose up from their chaff shakedown on the floor. Pringle's blue nightcap had come off during the night, and when his little feet touched the cold floor he gave a sneeze or two. Then, after putting on their jackets and saying their prayers, they each took a little wooden pail and went for a 'gang' of water. It was twenty minutes before they got back, for there were other children and women before them. After eating a piece of oatcake they set out for their work, a mile off, with some barley bannock and one of the secreted eggs, previously boiled, to serve them till evening. 'We 'll be sune hame, mother,' said Leezbeth. 'And we 'll bring oor wages,' added Pringle, as he went down the little unrailed stair, his two feet on each step in turn.

Bauldie left for the Turkey-red dyer's in a quarter of an hour, with the second of the eggs. Beenie, after rising, had to lie down sick. A little before six Mr. Peter Buchanan himself rose, and, after asking how the fire had gone out, threw on his coat, and, putting on his shoes, was fully dressed. He was in great perplexity; as he put it, having no light on the path of duty. For there was to be on that day—first of all, the funeral of a well-to-do man two miles beyond Ruglen, and there would be bread and cheese and other refreshments more than once on the way, for the man was to be buried in the High Kirk graveyard in Glasgow. Secondly, there was a Communion service at Riccarton, beyond Kilmarnock—twenty miles off. That was to begin at two o'clock, and would last till four or five. By judicious

management, if he went to it, he might hope to secure an invitation to stay over Sabbath and Monday. As a stranger and an elder he would be invited to the big Monday's dinner at the minister's. He had greatly distinguished himself at it a year ago. That is the worst of fame—if you once taste it you are unhappy till you taste it again. He had been requested to ask a blessing, and as he had been present at all the services since the Thursday, he gave a brief *résumé* of the various sermons, and prefaces on the Psalms, as also the chief points that had been touched on in the Fencing of the Tables, though he parenthetically lamented several omissions which he duly specified, and had reached the second Table address, when something happened of which there were long current two versions. One was that Mary Hood, who had been busy cooking, washing dishes, serving tables, making shakedowns, for almost a week, through utter exhaustion let the tureen with all the broth in it fall to the floor. The second version was that, losing her temper, she cried out, 'There 's a time for everything, ye auld hypocrite! I've a good mind to throw the broth aboot ye.' But the true version is this: she came behind his chair, and, with a shaking voice, said, 'I beg your pardon for interrupting ye, sir, but the broth 's getting cauld, and I 'm feart I let it fa'.' For days after she feared she had given a wrong touch to the Ark, and would not have been surprised at any moment if ravens had come to peck out her eyes, or she-bears to devour her. She was only reassured some days after, when the oldest and best of the elders stepped into her kitchen and said, 'That was a guid turn ye did us, my woman Mary. There 's a shilling to ye for it, and if ye had only stoppit him quarter of an hour suner, I micht hae made it twa. I dinna think he would hae been dune yet, if ye hadna stoppit him.'

Mr. Buchanan only knew that his 'blessing' had been counted a masterpiece. He could not hope to rival it on this occasion. His own meetings of Session, of which I have told you, had prevented him from setting out; but then, on the other hand, by properly timing his arrival

at the Saturday service, his appearance would be the more noticed and welcomed.

But thirdly—there was to be a hanging that day, at nine o'clock, in Jail Square, of two boys who had stolen between them about eight and sixpence. There had been no hanging now for more than a year—Mr. Buchanan feared rulers were getting lax—and he had not missed one for three and thirty years. It was every man's duty, he held, to be present at the vindication of law and order, and though, he confessed, the blasphemous and filthy talk and revelry, that went on for hours before and during the executions, vexed his righteous soul, yet, was it not plainly his duty to be there?

That was the problem he had to face. It was a sore trial that three such duties—and duties were privileges—should all occur on one day. There was enough material in them to make a whole memorable week. To add to his perplexity, Weelum Dickie called in near seven. He was going to the hanging, and then to the funeral. But it was well known he had no gift of utterance, and a Communion service was not so much in his line, whereas when it came to eating bread and cheese he was not one whit behind the very chiefest of mourners.

Mrs. Buchanan hated the sight of Mr. Dickie, and indeed no one liked Gooseberry Dickie, or the Grozet, as he was generally called, even to his face. He had left the Established Church, ostensibly because the precentor had read the Psalm one Sabbath two lines at a time instead of one, and all things, he held—I am not responsible for his reasoning processes—should be done 'according to the pattern shown in the mount.' His real reason for leaving was because he had not been made an elder. How did he get the name of Grozet? Five and twenty years before, a Bridgeton publican, with a characteristic eye to business, had offered a prize in kind to the man who should exhibit the two biggest gooseberries at a forthcoming show. Weelum Dickie had a notorious bush, and stood sure to win. The Sabbath before the show, Mr. Dickie, while in

church, saw to his horror the sky suddenly darkening; for one shower on his unprotected berries might be fatal both for them and him. Affecting to be seized by sudden pain in his chest, he crawled slowly out of church, and, once round the corner, set off for home as fast as his legs could carry him. He was only half-way, however, when such a deluge of rain came down, accompanied by thunder and lightning, that he was forced to flee for shelter into the porch of an Established Church. To his surprise he found his wife standing at the top of the side stair that led to the gallery. So poorly clad was she, she dared not venture farther. She had been in the habit—unknown, of course, to him—of stealing into that church every Sabbath afternoon after the service had begun, on the chance of hearing something to comfort her amid the trials of the week. The storm only ceased when the last Psalm was being sung. Mr. Dickie and his wife left together. To his unspeakable mortification she took his arm, saying as she did so, 'It 's not often we are at church together.' It was the first time, poor creature, she had turned on him, and she repented and desisted the next moment. He had almost forgotten the gooseberries by the time they reached home—such was his rage, as you might well esteem—but they came into his mind in time. Fortunately, as yet, they were all right, but what if the sun came out strong? For precaution's sake he spread his large blue and buff handkerchief over them, having first made sure no one was watching him. Two weeks afterwards his wife was summoned before the Session for having entered an Established Church, 'bowing down,' as her husband put it, 'in the house of Rimmon.'

'But you were bowing down in the house of Rimmon yourself,' said another elder.

'I was not,' was the triumphant answer. 'My wife was there *worshipping*, I was only sheltering.'

By a majority it was ordered that Mrs. Dickie be censured and debarred from sealing ordinances. Mr. Dickie stood higher than ever, for a day or two, in the eyes of some, as a man of unbending principle. It may interest some to

know that, possibly from damp and heat, possibly from a policy of pinpricks furtively pursued by a near neighbour who had been watching—the two biggest gooseberries were found burst on the morning of the show, and all the reward that Mr. Dickie got for his diligence out of season was the nickname that stuck to him to his dying day.

But to resume—once more!—Mrs. Buchanan had now got a kindling from an old widow, Lucky M'Ewan, who was also under suspension at this time on suspicion of witchcraft. Certain it was that, on the morning of the day on which Neil Spiers' little Susan had fallen over the stair, Lucky had smiled to her, and, though Lucky said it was surely a mother's fault in letting a bairn of thirteen months old play on an outside stair that had no railing, that attempt at defence was considered a reflexion on Providence and on the angels that have charge of us, though how that cleared the angels there were some who failed to see.

'Is breakfast no ready?' said Mr. Buchanan to his wife. 'Mind, Mr. Dickie 's hungry.'

Mrs. Buchanan had several retorts ready, but she kept silence. Her husband might have remembered the proverb which says there 's something uncanny about a woman who doesn't speak when she gets the chance, but he rushed upon his fate.

'Mr. Dickie 's hungry,' he repeated.

'Ah, well,' she said, 'it 's little more than six hours since he got his supper here, and some of us have still yesterday's dinner to get.'

And the shot went home.

'She 's only the daughter of a Prestonpans slave,' he said afterwards, when giving a garbled version of what happened, 'but she 's a dangerous woman; there 's more in her than ye wud think.'

To Mr. Dickie Mr. Buchanan now told his great perplexity as to what he ought to do.

'I think ye should go to Riccarton, and I 'll go to the hanging and represent the Session. Ye wud hae gane if it had been alloo'd.'

'I confess I see no light on the path o' duty,' said Mr. Buchanan.

'I think ye should tak your breakfast,' said Mr. Dickie. 'Ye are letting this weigh too sair on ye, Peter.'

And with that they fell to, and between them gobbled over a big bowl of oatmeal brose, made of oatmeal and mutton fat, with boiling water poured over it, and salt.

'Is the path o' duty no becoming plainer? I fear ye are takkin your diffeeculties too sair to heart. Would a drink o' yill no help ye?'

'If the path o' duty 's no plain,' said Mrs. Buchanan, 'I think I could direct ye. There 's a pair o' shoon ye promised to hae ready for a lass three weeks ago, and they 're no begun. Meetings o' Session are a' very weel, but they dinna keep this hoose in brose.'

That settled the point. Mr. Buchanan meant to have family worship, but Nicholas was evidently in too unspiritual a frame of mind, and Mr. Dickie did not press him. He had had his breakfast, and wished to be as near the gallows as possible, and by this time the people were flocking east.

Mr. Buchanan set off with him, having first filled his pockets with oatcake and four onions which he took off a string that hung from the roof, and taken eighteenpence out of his chest, which he locked with great deliberation and many suggestive glances.

There was in those days, I am ashamed to say, a renewal of the great controversy as to whether the bread and wine at the Communion should be lifted before the thanksgiving prayer or not, and people and ministers had been divided into 'Lifters' and 'Anti-lifters.' It seems a small controversy, but it is a big one compared with some others that have rent the Church of Christ in Scotland. Mr. Buchanan was, of course, an 'Anti-lifter.' Anything beginning with 'Anti' appealed to him. On his way to the Ford at the Broomielaw, he cried in at a bookseller's, and seeing a pamphlet entitled—'Mene, Mene, Tekel: The Lifters lifted and cast into the Mire, by Philalethes, a Lover of

Despised Truth. *First pure, then peaceable,'* he read two or three pages, and, as they were as full of peppery personalities as anything he had for a time seen, he imagined that with a copy of this he would be doubly welcome at the Riccarton Communion, and cheerfully paid the sixpence, put the pamphlet inside his dark blue bonnet, and then, crossing the Ford, set out on his way. The bell at the foot of the Salt Market was already tolling for the hanging, though it was but half-past eight, and the two poor sobbing boys had still half an hour to live. The tolling went to Mr. Buchanan's heart. He felt like Jonah fleeing to Tarshish. Ought he not to have stayed to see justice vindicated and God glorified? Yet, if he stayed, the afternoon service would be over. Duty clearly demanded that he should go on.

I meant to tell how at Strathbungo he fell in with James Brash, a stocking-maker from the Gorbals, on his way to Johnstone; and how, after passing on the first half-mile of their way Davie Kinnimont's public-house and Martha Risk's and Samuel Bowie's and Peggy Plenderleith's, they halted at last at Mirron Templeton's. I meant to tell what they did and said there, and how they almost quarrelled as to who should ask a blessing; but you would think I was trying to make you laugh, and there 's no hope of Scotland being cured of its drunkenness as long as even we teetotallers can tell funny stories about it. Drinking is too awful a thing and too real a thing to many of us, ever to be in any aspect a source of merriment. Enough to say, Peter Buchanan lost half an hour there, and that half-hour made history for more than one.

I should have liked to tell how much he saw to vex him on his way. The sight of the hedges grieved him. There was no need for hedges. They only sheltered birds that ate the crops, and they deprived herds of employment. He could mind the day when there was no such thing. And look at all the drainage that was going on! Alas! Alas! He feared it was but an interfering with Providence, who had set bounds to the water-courses. And there was a

man ploughing on Candlemas day! The tenth of March was the day their forefathers always began. And were these cattle in the fields? Why, in his young days cattle got boiled chaff and mashed whins till the first of April, and were then bled before they were let out to graze. Many a time he had helped to carry bullocks when they were too weak to stand.

After parting with James Brash he made up on the Ayrshire carrier, who was due, if possible, at Mauchline about nine o'clock that evening. From him Mr. Buchanan got another sore dunt to his heart. The carrier had got a reading of a newspaper, and saw that the Government meant the following year to take a census.

'You mean to count the people as Dawvit did?' said Mr. Buchanan.

'Ay,' said the carrier, 'to count the people, but no as Dawvit did. It a' depended on the motive.'

Mr. Buchanan couldn't see that.

'What was it the Government really meant to do?'

'Weel,' said the carrier, 'papers are to be left at a' the hooses, and we are to tell whether we are merried or no, and hoo auld we are, and hoo mony children we hae had, and if they are leeving, and hoo auld they are.'

'Supposing it was a Scriptural thing to dae, and not against a' use an' wont, it would beat me to fill it up. I couldna tell whether I hae had fourteen or fifteen children, and hoo am I to find it oot.'

'Your wife 'll ken.'

'But if my wife 's deid?'

'Maybe the weans that are left could tell ye.'

'But if I dinna ken whaur they are?'

'Oh, weel, you would just hae to write that doun, and say that God's mercies hae been sae mony that ye canna reckon them. But surely you dinna mean to say you dinna ken whaur your children are?'

'I hae four at hame—Bauldie and Beenie and Leezbeth and —— a little boy. Next to them are Kirsty and Janet: they 're servants at Cumbernauld; at least, they went

there twa years ago, and I havena heard from them since. Saunders is the next. I hired him oot at the Fair the year afore last to a farmer at Eaglesham, but maybe he has shifted. My oldest leeving is a theeker in the Gorbals. They say he 's merrit, but I forbade him the hoose since he went to the Burgher Kirk. The young show little reverence to their parents nowadays.'

'And is that a' that 's leeving?'

'I think sae. Oh, no, there 's Matthew. He 's a sailor; and when he cam' back frae the Indies he went oot against my wull to a nicht school to learn reading, and was gruppit by the pressgang. And, besides, supposing I did remember, hoo is the paper to be filled up if I 'm awa' frae hame—as I am very apt to be at this time o' the year—seeing I 'm the only yin in the hoose that can either read or write?'

'Oh, weel,' said the carrier, 'your wife, if you hae a wife, or the weans, if they keep hoose theirsels and are auld enough to understaun' what the man says to them, when he ca's for the paper can tell him that their feyther is awa' ca'ing on his sons and dochters to see hoo mony they are, and whether they 're leeving or no, to get material to fill up the paper. A man can but do his best. But, maybe, you are gaun to ca' on some o' your sons and dochters the day?'

Not knowing how to answer this thrust, Mr. Buchanan took off his bonnet to mop his brow and gain time. The sight of the pamphlet gave him a welcome diversion. 'Have you seen that?' he said, 'it 's powerful written.'

'No, man,' said the carrier; 'the last pamphlet I read was about sending the Gospel to the heathen. It was written by a Mr. Carey, who was once a shoemaker, and since I read about lifting men and women to Heaven the question of lifting the bread at the Communion seems to me not worth mentioning.'

'I think shoemakers should stick to their lasts,' said Mr. Buchanan, who, suddenly remembering he was a shoemaker and that sticking to his last would not describe him very accurately, added, 'If God wanted heathen to be

saved He could do it without Mr. Carey, and if the people in Hindostan wish Gospel ordinances they should supply themselves with them. And if we want to do things for God we can do them at home.'

'That 's what I think too,' said the carrier, 'and I 'm glad we agree for aince; and if you want to work for the heathen at home, you hae as guid an opportunity as ony man I 've met wi' this while.'

At this moment the carrier's cart, which was carrying no less than four hundredweights of goods, stuck in the mire. They were two miles from Dalry, and to avoid a deep pool of water which lay across the road the carrier had turned into a field. The horse fell on its side, and, getting entangled in the straw ropes, floundered badly.

'I 'd hae waited to help ye,' said Mr. Buchanan, 'but I 'll be late for the sermon at Riccarton. Somebody will maybe turn up. I think yonder 's somebody on the left. He 'll be here in a meenute. You can ask him.'

'Oh,' said the carrier, 'it 's vera good o' ye to direct me what to do, but I think I hae enough o' intelligence for that.'

Two minutes after he was gone the carrier noticed that he had left his pamphlet behind him. He picked it up and laughed. 'He may weel ca' himsel an Anti-lifter. Man, I wish I had thocht on that suner, but that 's aye the way wi' me. But the king may come in the cadger's road yet. He 's the first man, gentle or simple, that ever refused me a helping hand.'

Twelve minutes after, the person on the left, who turned out to be a young lad, came up. They emptied the cart, got the horse up, mended the harness—and the lad, I tell you, was good at it—got the cart out of the field and on to the road, yoked and refilled it.

'I 'm much obleeged to ye,' said the carrier. 'Wha are ye and whaur are ye gaun?'

'My name 's Saunders Buchanan. I 'm on a farm at Stewarton, and I havena seen my feyther or mither for eighteen months. My master gie'd me a holiday, so I rose

at twa this morning and got on wi' my wark, and I 'm gaun to Anderston, and I 'll be back the morn's morning at six.'

'Well, I 'm glad I met ye, for I parted a little ago wi' the dourest crater I ever met, but you 've ta'en the taste o' him oot o' my mouth already.'

'Would he no help ye ?' said Saunders.

'Not he; and I was juist haein' a joke wi' mysel. He droppit this pamphlet. I 'm sorry it 's a' glaur. It 's aboot lifting the bread at the Communion. He 's opposed to that. I don't see onything aboot that in the Bible, but I read plenty aboot lifting an ox or an ass oot o' the pit, and I suppose that applies to a horse tae. I 'll gie ye the pamphlet to keep, and if ever ye 're sending a parcel to your lass——'

'I havena got yin,' said Saunders blushing.

'God's time is time enough,' said the carrier, 'but I 'll dae it as cheap for ye as I would dae't for ony man. Keep the pamphlet. But mebbe ye canna read ?'

'Ay, can I, and I 'm fell fond o' reading. I 've learnt mysel' sin' I left hame, but they dinna ken that, and I mean to astonish them the nicht when they tak the books.'

'Man, I like ye,' said the carrier; 'I dinna ken hoo it is, but I like ye. I 'm glad ye 've nane o' that auld hypocrite's wy wi' ye. And some day I hope we 'll forgather. I leeve in the Gorbals. My wife would be glad to see ye, and I 've twa dochters. Elsie 's her mother's favourite, but Ailie 's mine—and ye micht dae waur. Man, I tell ye,' added the carrier, solemnly, taking off his bonnet, 'I wonder hoo a man that has dochters can rest nicht or day till he sees them merrit to well-daein', godly men.'

Meantime, while her husband was discussing theological problems, Mrs. Buchanan was hard at work. A farmer, out Scotstoun way, had hired her for fourpence to carry manure into one of his fields. Her feet bled sore, and the money was well earned. When she came home she found Beenie still very sick. Indeed, so sick was she that her

mother, when, on crossing the street to carry in her Sabbath supply of peats and buy four salt herrings at the ironmonger's, she met the doctor, asked him to come in and have a look at her. The doctor at once began to talk of his son, Lockhart. It had been Lockhart's privilege as Dux of the High School to go with two other boys to the University the day before, to knock according to ancient custom at the Humanity Class-room door, and, after their admission, to make a short Latin speech claiming for his schoolmates a holiday on Candlemas. 'Would you like to hear what Lockhart said?' asked the doctor.

But just at this moment Leezbeth and Pringle came in, looking very dowie.

'This was the speech—Docte Professor, nos, discipuli S. S. Glasguensis, pro nobis et nostris condiscipulis adsumus ut ferias petamus. And then the Professor gave an answer in Latin, the students meantime standing up in their red gowns and giving the three little lads a cheer.'

Little Pringle didn't take in much of what the doctor said, but he and his mother would have been not a little surprised had they been told that that day twenty-four years afterwards Pringle himself, as Assistant Professor of Latin, would receive three High School boys, who should make a similar request, and would return a like gracious answer.

'Then this forenoon,' continued the doctor, 'all the boys brought their game-cocks to school for the annual fight. The Sheriff and Provost and some of the magistrates looked in at the High School on their way back from the hanging. It was the toughest fight that has ever been seen, but I am glad to say Lockhart's Aesculapius won. It was one he bought when it was a chicken with a sixpence which his mother gave him for learning the 119th Psalm. She 's a proud woman, I can tell you! It fought twenty rounds and killed nine of the other birds. The son of my good friend, the minister of ——, thought his was to win, and it was a close enough thing at the end. Oh, I think Lockhart will do; he has carried everything before him so far.

Said the 119th Psalm without a mistake, which is more than I could do myself, and his cock killed nine birds.'

The doctor was now going away, when Mrs. Buchanan asked what he thought of Beenie.

'Oh, Beenie,' he said, 'I was nearly forgetting.'

Lighting a candle, he examined her for a little, and then pronounced it a case of small-pox. All Mrs. Buchanan could do in the meantime was to put the other little ones beside her, and keep them warm. 'Put them together, and it will be one handling.' That, however, Mrs. Buchanan determined she would *not* do.

When the doctor was gone she asked Leezbeth and Pringle what was wrong, and why they were so late. Leezbeth was crying, and Pringle trying not to. Mrs. Buchanan feared they had been told not to come back on Monday, and they were the chief wage-winners in the house. But it was not that. When they stopped work the manager had sent for them and said that though Pringle had been working only eleven days, yet, as he was a manly little fellow, and had never been late, he was going to give him a full fortnight's pay. Here was sixpence each for them, and they were to be careful and not lose it. The children had not formed any idea as to what pay they would likely get, but a half-penny a day for eleven hours' work struck them as not excessive. They had fondly imagined they were keeping the house, and this was a sad blow to them. But there was worse to follow. On their way home a woman, noticing the sixpences in their hands, asked them to go for a ha'penny worth of salt for her. Here was the ha'penny and a bowl (well cracked), and she would hold the two sixpences for them till they came back. When they got back the woman was gone, and a great fear came into their little hearts. They had just sobbed out their story, and told their mother that the bowl with the salt was at the foot of the stair, when their big brother Saunders came in. He had but two hours to stay, but in that time he saw and heard enough to vex and disappoint him. His

wages for eighteen months had been 24s., of which he had saved 19s. 0½d. He had intended to buy a grammar and an arithmetic book, but that was out of the question now. Going out for a little, he bought four penny stalks of claggum for the children. He had got half a stalk himself the day his father was married for a second time, and he had thought it Paradise regained. The taste had never gone out of his mouth. Next, he gave Leezbeth and Pringle each a sixpence for those that had been stolen from them, and threepence each to the invalid and the Turkey-red dyer, who had come in with the comforting news that if trade was brisk he was to get a shilling a week at the end of the month. Then he slipped fifteen shillings into his mother's hand, saying, 'That 's on condition that you don't tell my feyther.' He did not know how near he had been to meeting him that day, but as he was going away he produced the pamphlet the carrier had given him, and said, 'I got that from a man for helping him wi' his horse. Mebbe my feyther would like to see it.' And so saying, he set out on his return journey, after eating some oatcake and a bit of cheese, which his mother had run out to buy.

(Little Robina's illness, happily, did not turn out as the doctor feared.)

To return to Mr. Buchanan. After parting with the carrier, he, coming to the Relief Kirk at Beith, saw two men painting tears on the church door.

'Wha 's the tears for?' he asked.

'For oor minister,' said one of the painters. 'He took the fever sitting up wi' a lad, and he has left a wife and six little anes.'

'He was a Lifter, wasn't he?'

'Ay, but what aboot that?'

'And he read his sermons?'

'Ay, the Presbytery, by a majority, alloo'd him after he had the shock.'

'Yes, but the Presbytery had nae richt to. Didn't our Lord close the book after He gave out His text?'

'Yes,' said the man; 'but books in those days were na' shapit like oors.'

'And, besides,' continued Mr. Buchanan, 'if a man reads his sermons, how can he offer the petition, "Bring to ready recollection premeditated truth"?'

'I dinna ken where in the Bible we are commanded to offer up that petition. It 's no in the Lord's Prayer.'

But here the other painter broke in. 'If ye say anither word against oor minister, my mate and me that are baith Lifters 'll lift ye ower the brig, and the watter 's twelve feet deep.'

'But,' said the other, 'I 'm no sure if we are daein' oor duty in lettin' ye aff, for, ye see, if we dinna throw ye into the linn, hoo can ye offer up the petition, "Deliver me out o' the deep waters"?'

Whereupon Mr. Buchanan made haste to 'scape away.

Public worship, alas! was over when he reached Riccarton, so that the dramatic effect his arrival was to produce did not come off. The young minister who had officiated, and who had already preached in the forenoon, had been called to see a dying man five miles off. Mr. Buchanan was disappointed and incensed beyond measure.

'Away visiting on a Saturday! A minister's proper place on such a day was either the pulpit or the study. But I fear this young man cares as little for the one as for the other. Public worship over in two and a half hours! I have seen the day when people were greedy for the word of God.'

'Ah, weel,' said a farmer to whom he was speaking, 'the folks that were there two and a half hours ago were at least as greedy for the Word as them that took guid care to come only when the sermon was dune!'

Mr. Buchanan had made another bad shot. He had done himself out of an invitation to that farmer's house. He must just go to the village ale-house, and buy refreshments like an ordinary man. There he met several, to whom he enlarged on the sins and crying evils of the time, and the controversy that arose was only ended by the closing of the

door at ten o'clock. Then Mr. Buchanan went out into the dark alone. That night he slept in an out-house amongst some old straw.

In the morning, taking care not to remove the straws that stuck in his hair—for he must either excite pity, and so gain a lodging that night, or take the road to Anderston—he was early in the churchyard, apparently lost in contemplation. Some of those who had been in the ale-house recognised him, but it did him no good. Carrier Carnduff, who had not been able to get past Kilmarnock the previous evening, was also in church that day, and, though not a communicant, had watched and enjoyed the holy festival. He had not noticed Mr. Buchanan, strange to say; but on coming back to the evening sermon—the church had skailed at four, to resume at five—he heard the sounds of discussion. A voice he instantly recognised was finding fault with many things, and especially with the lifting of the bread at the Communion. 'What kind o' thing was that to do?'

'I'll answer that,' said the carrier, coming forward. 'The last man that broached that point to me—and it was no later than yestreen—refused to help me to lift my horse when it fell, and my ropes were broke, and it was sticking in the mud. Mebbe ye can tell us, for I can see ye hae studied the question, whether it 's a greater sin to lift a bit o' bread, or no to lift a strangled horse? We 've had a happy, happy Communion Sabbath, and dinna ye try to spoil it.'

'The puir cratur,' said one of the farmers to the minister afterwards, 'looked sae cowed that I could see he was for makin' hame. I noticed that he had slept maist o' the time in the kirk and I jalouse he was even hungrier than he was sleepy. I felt sae wae for him that I took him hame wi' us. There was something guid aboot him, tae, I thought, but the wife 'll no gie in to that. Na, he wouldna bide to the preaching on the Monday—his rheumatics were sae bad. When he said that, the wife made up a piece for him, but tell 't him he maun tak a cupful o' the bottle she got

from the Colmonell herbalist, and he had to tak it. If ye had seen the face he pit on. I never saw the weans enjoy onything like it. They 've been imitatin' him ever since. I tell ye it 'll be weeks afore he gets the taste oot o' his mooth, for it 's the most awful stuff; from the moment it gangs ower your throat your rheumatism 's clean forgot! The rheumatism 's bad, but it 's transports o' joy compared wi' the stuff that cures it!'

When Mr. Buchanan got home he found Mr. Dickie awaiting him. He had come in on the by-going, on the chance of Mr. Buchanan being at home, to tell him about the hanging.

'What 's that you 're reading?' said Mr. Buchanan.

'Oh,' said Mr. Dickie, 'your son Saunders was here on Saturday and left this pamphlet for ye. It 's about the Lifters. Your wife tells me he got it frae a man on the road that was dune wi' it—a carrier, didn't he say?'

Mr. Buchanan's sin had found him out. Once more he groaned and changed the subject.

'Ye said it was an interesting hangin'?'

'It wis.'

'I 'm sorry I didna see it. I sair misdoot I mistook the path o' duty on Saturday. I havena missed a hangin' for three and thirty years, and I doot for my unfaithfulness I 'll no be preevileged to see anither. I fear my time here is no gaun to be lang.'

'Dinna be feart,' said Mrs. Buchanan. 'If it was richt to hang thae twa laddies for a' *they* did, juist gang on as ye 've been daein', and if ye be spared ye 'll mebbe baith see another hangin', tho' whether ye 'll think it such a preevilege, as ye ca' it, I 'll no say.'

Then the two men looked at each other and went out. Mr. Dickie first broke the silence.

'I 'm sorry for ye, Peter. Nicholas is a dangerous woman. I saw that all along. It was an awfu' thing for her to hint that her ain man micht come to the gallows, an' him an elder, sae muckle respectit and sae welcome at Communions faur and near!'

Then Mr. Buchanan looked at *him* and said—

'Did ye think she meant *me*? I was allooing she was aiming at you, Grozet.'

My own impression is—and perhaps you will agree with me—that she was aiming at them *both*.

So closed this week-end a hundred years ago; and here I ought to stop. But perhaps there are some who would like to know if Ailie Carnduff and Saunders Buchanan ever met, and what, if anything, came of their meeting.

After leaving his father's house, Saunders, as he passed through the Gorbals, saw an old woman filling two big water stoups at a pump well, and offered, of course, to carry them home for her.

'Thank you kindly,' she said, 'I 'll be much obleeged if you do. I generally get the carrier's dochter to carry them, but she has been nursing a neebour's bairn that 's very ill, and that kept her.' But even as she spoke, the carrier's daughter came running down the street, and not many girls could run as gracefully as Ailie Carnduff.

'Grannie, I 'm sorry,' she said, 'but I see you have got some one to help you.' The three walked together for less than two hundred yards. Saunders told them he had to walk to Stewarton. Ailie pitied him, and the old woman thanked him very warmly. Then they parted.

'That 's a very ceevil lad, Ailie,' the old woman said. Then after a little she added—

'If ye had a lad like that——'

But at these words Ailie saucily tossed her head, and well it was for Saunders he did not see her do it, for if he had he never could have forgotten it and he never could have fully understood it. They all do it, I am told—at least, in books; just as a willing horse makes a feint of refusing the collar it longs to wear. As for Saunders, he thought he had seen a vision of an angel, and so he had. He remembered her tall, graceful figure, the pretty shape and poise of her head, and her bonnie face; but more than by these he was moved by her rich, deep voice. When he

was saying his prayers after he reached home, after praying for all whom he was wont to remember, he began another petition—'And bless the lass'—but he stopped, afraid to say more. But where he paused, Christ stepped in and finished the petition. Of the strange way He led them I have only time to tell the end.

When the carrier came home on the Tuesday evening he told as usual his adventures by the way, and amongst them his meeting with a lad to whom he had taken a great liking. After he had finished that part of his story Ailie said she wondered if that could be the lad she had seen carrying Granny Webster's water-stoups. He had said he was walking to Stewarton; and she described his dress and look.

'The verra same,' said her father.

'And did he walk this way?'

And she imitated his rolling gait. Then she spoke like him, and did it well, for God had given her the great and solemn gift of mimicry. Her father laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, but her mother checked her for mocking, and said—

'He micht be your man yet.'

'*Him!*' said Ailie, and she tossed her head a second time. 'I wonder why everybody seems set on my marrying that great big country callant?'

The end was long in coming, but it came. It always comes. This time it came with a letter:—

"AILIE,—Sir Robert Hamilton has asked me to be 'grieve' over the Home Farm. The grieve's house is a pretty little cottage with four rooms and kitchen. There 's a garden, and I 'm to get a cow's grass and £80 a year. I want you to be the grieve's wife. Are you willing?"

He got her answer three days after, and he read it on his knees. It was evidently written in great fear and joy. It began—'My dear friend.' She thanked him for his offer. She was not a scholar like him; and was he quite sure he might not see some one afterwards that would be

more worthy of him? She wished him well with all her heart. But she signed the letter, 'Your faithful, and I would like to add, your loving friend,

ALISON CARNDUFF.'

They were married on the 13th of the following May, on a Friday. They had family worship that evening, reading the first chapter of Genesis and singing the First Psalm. Next morning they read the first of Matthew and sang a bit of the Second Psalm, and so continued until they had read through the Bible and sung the Psalms many times.

But much happened in the meantime. Saunders gained favour both in the sight of God and man, and ere many years had passed was factor on a great estate and held the balance even.

They had four daughters and three sons—all singers; and on a summer evening you might sometimes have found a nobleman and his wife and their guests standing behind a clump of laurels listening to the singing at worship in the factor's house, all the parts going, for two of the sons sang tenor and two of the girls alto.

Ailie was the first to go. She died rather suddenly, only one hour after worship. They had sung the 121st Psalm, whose last words are—

'The Lord shall keep thy soul,
He shall defend thee from all ill.
Henceforth thy going out and in
God keep for ever will.'

And to Saunders and his wife and their children and their children's children, in all places of God's dominion, that promise has been kept until this very hour.

CHAPTER XV

LETTERS IN THE YEARS 1900-1907

'Does the road wind uphill all the way?—
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?—
From morn to night, my friend.'

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

To Dr. Denney

GREENOCK, *Feb.* 28, 1900.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—. . . This last week I had over eighteen hours of my time clipped off scraping out a very bad and ludicrous mistake in the *M. W.* It was the printer's fault entirely, and after three thousand copies were printed there was nothing for it but to sit down with a penknife and scrape the mistake out of each of them. I can see now that we are all of us 'types'—not simply 'living epistles,' but printing presses with capacity for making impressions that beats any American invention hollow. I had to spend the time in the workshop, and I can feel now, as I did not before, for people who do the same mechanical thing from morning to night, year after year. It must be maddening. . . .

To the same

(On receiving Dr. Denney's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.)

GREENOCK, *June* 11, 1900.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—A right royal gift! And I foresee a fierce competition for it at the sale of my effects.

Curious word—effects—at least in that connection. I have always been afraid of *Romans*, but I have begun to love it already, and hope not to be so much ashamed to meet Paul. I wonder if patterns of books ever reach Heaven. I think Paul would be pleased with your volume from every point of view—publisher and author alike!

And now, for an *oratio* in the sense of *petitio obliqua*. You took away those lectures on *James*, and now, having finished *Hebrews*, I'm in *James*—have been for two Sabbaths—and I feel a dreadful want. Though I have read them over so often before, yet the case is different now. There are some I have that I could exchange. This oratio is not very obliqua, but I am ashamed to make it directa, I have so abused and trespassed on your goodness and on Mrs. Denney's intercession before. And yet—you have helped me before, and I'm pretty old now and stupid and done even beyond my years. 'Ye micht!' as poor old Nanny Webster said, and we all have said in solemn moments. I was talking to my people the other day on the Israelites having to go down to the Philistines to sharpen their tools—on the duty of learning to sharpen our own axes—the text was suggested by a bit of Milton's *Areopagitica*; but their case and mine are different. You're an Israelite, to begin with, a master cutler. And if my axe is blunt I must put to more strength. . . .

To the same

(Dr. Denney having become joint editor of the Union Magazine along with Professor Orr.)

GREENOCK, *Jan.* 1901.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—I like your magazine. Your own paper is a most solemn one, and some of its practical advice I must put into action at once. It must be strange for you to have such work on hand now, especially to have to run in double harness. Your being an editor draws you nearer to me somehow. . . .

To the same

GREENOCK, *Feb.* 27, 1901.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—I meant to write you in any case to tell you that Dr. Robertson Nicoll had asked me if I would not think of making up a volume out of the earlier numbers of the *Morning Watch*, and of issuing the *M. W.* in future, so far as England is concerned, in connection with Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton. It was a most kind letter, and I cannot be too grateful to him. I have thought it over, however, and think of saying 'No' to both suggestions. The early volumes, in spite of your contributions, and your kind words, nearly give me fits every time I look at them. As for the second proposal, the *Watch* is like a little soap bubble which may live and float for a few moments if left alone, but if such a pair of lungs as Dr. Robertson Nicoll's begin to puff it, it will go into—space! I think, sir, as Goldsmith said to the Doctor, that is a very good metaphor.

As for the matter you write about, the whole idea is utterly distasteful to me. Of course I must face all responsibility that flows from having to do with the little magazine, but I hope I may escape some part of the due reward of my deeds. The very thought of being written about—from lines even in our local paper: judge by that the proportionate agony of an appearance in the monthly—makes me feel sick. It 's awfully good of Dr. Robertson Nicoll, but I want to stay in my shell. The view one gets of a 'whelk' when wormed out by a pin is not prepossessing. Qwilk whelk is me! I know you would transfix your toad as if you loved him. All the same, I hope when the *B. M.* comes out, it may be said of ilk toad-in-the-hole, 'non est inventus.'—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. A. Smellie

52 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Feb. 15, 1901.

MY DEAR SMELLIE,—Am I not glad? You have got a goodly heritage. God Almighty bless the little laddie. I

once travelled with a woman who said she had a son a philosopher. (She turned out to be the mother of a man, ——, F.C. student, Clark Fellow, I think, in philosophy). She said that when he was born she asked only one thing from God—that He would make him good. And 'God has not only made him good, but clever as well.' I do thank you for writing.

Remember me kindly to Mrs. Smellie. I forgot to thank you for the volume of the magazine you sent me. I use them often.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Dr. Denney

(J. P. S. suffering from an attack of quinsy.)

March 1901.

MY DEAR DENNEY,—You are a good soul, and you know it, and so does your wife!

If I am better by Sabbath I am to dispense with evening sermon: so I have arranged with my elders. Perhaps we needed to see that the Communion is a simpler and a grander thing than we know it. Quite a number of precedents must go by the board this time. This was our night for receiving communicants, and I have told the elders they can do it, and the Session will justify it afterwards. There 's mint and cummin for you, and rue too. I should have liked to welcome the communicants myself. In the daytime I am not so bad, but the nights are terrible. I can't lie—not in the Washingtonian sense, alas!—and have to pace to and fro. I have had to get morphia injected for all the sleep I have had since Friday. I have learned that a man can pray and say, 'Have mercy,' and it is as meaningless as 'Oh dear!' . . .

To the Rev. E. F. H. Capey

March 20, 1901.

. . . YOUR letter greatly delighted me. But if you have learned from me, I hope—and need—to learn more from

you. It is a great honour to have anything of mine copied into your *Young People*. I only wish I could give you the sketches. I have not yet reviewed in any paper or in the *Watch* the handsome volume you so kindly sent me at the New Year. You have praised me too much! It would look like—'Claw you me, and I'll claw you.' But I mean to use other opportunities, though your work is so well done and you have so many ideas of your own that you don't need any help from me. But what I can, I will. We shall, perhaps, meet some day and have a talk about our editorial fears and joys. You can't have many idle moments in the month, and consequently not more than twelve times as many in the year. Forgive all my delays. I have no doubt you yourself are not perfect if I only knew you a little more! . . .

To the same

40 Eldon St., Greenock,
Jan. 9, 1902.

My dear Mr. Capey,—You are one of my thorns in the flesh. I recall your kind unanswered letter, with all that was so touching and interesting and friendly in it, fifty times a week, and blush at every remembrance of you. I fear my dilatory ways are now a second nature. I never seem to get my work done. But I know I have no excuse: you must forgive me, or at least pity me.

I have never been photo'ed—at least, not since I was a boy—unless in a group, and therefore cannot give you or anybody my likeness. But I am always pleased to get the likenesses of others. Your most handsome and successful volume, with its fine subjects and rare writers, makes me continually envious. It is good of you still to remember me. Isn't it fine work helping others? Every blessing on your head.—Yours ever gratefully and ashamedly,

J. P. Struthers.

To the same

40 Eldon St., Greenock,
June 13, 1902.

My dear Mr. Capey,—You are a good fellow to let me off so easily and kindly after my shameful delays. I don't seem to improve as I get older. I lost five or six weeks this spring through quinsy, an old acquaintance, but how much I lose every week through mismanagement of time I hope you have no idea. I thank you very, very much for your portrait. I like your face, and so does my great chum, a Mr. Grant, a United Free Church minister, whose discerning of spirits is evident from this specimen. He was once asked what a man's trade was who was pointed out to him in Dumfriesshire. 'Well, it puzzles me,' he said, 'for the man looks like a small farmer, or he might drive a coach, or he might be a beadle (church officer), or a postman! I really can't make out.' 'Well,' said the man who asked him, 'that 's not so bad after all. For he has a small croft, and he delivers the letters in the village, and he is the parish church officer, and in summer he drives the New Galloway and Dalry 'bus!' Now, when a man who can do that likes your face you should be almost as well pleased as I was.

I hope you are getting on nicely with all your work. I am *very* proud when you reprint anything from the *Watch*. You can't please me more. I regret I still have no photo of myself.

Are you never on the Clyde? My door is always open for you. *Young People* is always good. What a rare chat we could have if we met. I am kept so busy that I have refused a berth in a ship that is going to the Naval Review.[1] I somehow can't get up any enthusiasm. In fact, I fear I am positively disloyal!

All good go with you and all dear to you.—Yours, most gratefully and affectionately,

J. P. Struthers.

[1] To be held on the coronation of King Edward vii.

To Mr. Stewart Hutcheson

(At one time a member of J. P. S.'s Bible-class, on the birth of his son.)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Oct. 29, 1902.

MY DEAR MR. HUTCHESON,—It was indeed quite a personal pleasure and joy to me to read the good news in Monday's *Telegraph*. Though I have never called on you, I have had a great desire to be introduced to Mrs. Hutcheson, of whom on all sides I have heard so much that was good. I have often hoped that you would bring her round to my little room on a Sabbath, and I was always purposing to ask the elder at the plate to tell you how much I would like to see her. Maybe, if I do not call on you, you will bring her and her little son to see me some day you are in Greenock. I do pray God will make him His Own from his very birth, and further, if it be His will, that He will make his name great in Israel even in this world.

What a new world it must be to you both now! I think I see you hasting home at night with a new light and a new glory in your face. And I envy you. The blessing of the Three-One God be with you all continually.—Yours ever, gratefully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Rev. E. F. H. Capey

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Feb. 6, 1903.

MY DEAR MR. CAPEY,— . . . You have been so good to me that I feel I ought not to write a common letter to you, and so I wait and wait for some lofty imaginings, and they don't come, and time passes and I stand daily more and more condemned.

Your *Erasmus* is a most dainty book and most worthily done. The most competent critic of books I know read it and said *very* good. My little *Watch* doesn't lend itself somehow to notices of books, but I hope some way or other

to make mention of it. I envy you your capacity for such a high task. May God bless you.—Yours affectionately,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Miss Mary M'Neil

(*A young member who had been ill and was from home.*)

Dec. 4, 1903.

MY DEAR MISS MARY,—A visitor in a strange place loves either no letters or lots of them, and this is just to add to your number for the sake of your character—that like Saul you may be honoured before the people. It was his daughter who had to do with the pillow, you may not remember. Mrs. —— of Whithorn, I knew and know very well. Her husband used to send me over *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News* every Monday morning in those far-off days. Your brothers and sisters, so far as I know, seem to be doing no harm to anybody in the meantime. I have a canary now. Sings like a cherub. Got a ring put into its cage two nights ago, but won't venture into it. It will not choose the highest when it sees it. Did you see that story of the Kelso fisher-poacher?—fined £10, and £2 15s. of costs, or thirty days:—'But I can't pay £10.' 'We'll give you a week.' 'But a week's not enough.' 'How long will you take?' 'Oh, it just depends on hoo the fish come up.'

I hope you are well and cheery. You'll be so in love with Edinburgh you'll be for attending classes at the University next year.

And may God keep you sweetly trusting in Him. So prays your old minister, J. P. STRUTHERS.

I'll get a verbal answer from your brother to any letter I may send. Don't waste your pennies trying your strength.

To the same

(*The address being written on a pencil-ruled envelope in very childish half-text. The writer was fond of setting such little traps for folks.*)

DEAR MARY,—Sold again! Confess.

I meant to send you *Punch* this week. It was better than usual. But when I tried different shops—Thursday morning—it 's only published on Wednesday night—all gone. I went to the Caledonian Station, walked all the way on my road to the House of Refuge in the evening—found the stall closed! Must look smarter, though I don't see how I can—another time.

The enclosed card may suffuse your wasted cheeks with a momentary flush of joy. I got it from an old friend. Your letter was very, very welcome. The canary has done all a canary can do—and that 's not little—to cheer and help me. I wonder if they have any theology at all. Perfect faith without fear?

I asked the class to suggest a text for the last page of that weary protracted *Watch* for February 29. Got one or two suggestions, but none I could use. Wish I had asked you—or was it your sister who excelled in ignorance? I hear you are reckoned a great scribe where you are. Truly in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king. Don't bother writing. I 'll write again. Glad to hear such good news of you. You are a regular Jeshurun, I hear—eating quails like the men of the Exodus, not one day nor two days, but whole months. When you come home you 'll be wanting to return to the flesh-pots. God bless you always.

YOUR OLD MINISTER.

To Dr. Denney

(*When the publication of the* Union Magazine *of the United Free Church ceased.*)

40 ELDON STREET, GREENOCK,
Feb. 23, 1904.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—I meant to call yesterday but my plans were upset. I was curiously touched when I saw

'Finis' at the beginning of the Magazine, for I too am an editor, just as a horse-doctor is a doctor according to the blacksmith in *Silas Marner*, or as the skipper of a canal boat is captain even as he who commands a battleship. I have often wondered in what watch my Lord will come to me—what number will be the last. I think I would like to know. Some day you 'll tell me how you felt, and how often that little paragraph was written. Did you restrain your feelings quite easily? or did you gulp down your sorrow and wipe away your tears? or did you feel, as Grant suggested, like Manoah: 'Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail or knock the breast.' I certainly would have shown my feelings—my rage at my Church's ingratitude, and Grant said he would have given at least one little kick. I really do not know how you conquered yourself, unless you are in the habit of doing that. I felt queer when I read your words. The last time I saw you I didn't know you had reviewed Westcott. I somehow missed that number. But I have supplied that defect. I got more out of your review, more every way, than out of two vols. about the man. You 'll feel a want for many a day, and Mrs. Denney too. I hope she won't cast up your ex-editorship to you! Of course you are not to answer this, but even a sweep thinks about his own dissolution when a royal personage's bier is borne past. And when the cloud-capped towers fall, you can't blame a snail for giving a little shiver as it thinks of the next great event.

I heard one of the Gifford Lectures.[1] I recognised many words, like philosophie, molécule, psychologie, la co-ordination systématique, but the hiatuses were many and big and of considerable importance. Every sentence—as it were a broken Tay Bridge—impassable.

All vigour and length of days to you, and better work if possible than all you have yet done to the honour of our Lord.—Yours, J. P. STRUTHERS.

[1] Delivered in French by Professor Boutroux.

To J. P. S. from Dr. Denney

(*In reply to the last.*)

. . . MANY thanks for your condolences about the *Union Magazine*. Your speculations on the 'Finis' paragraph were entertaining. It was not I who wrote it at all, but Orr, who is one of the best of men—best by nature and best by grace. He showed it to me and asked if it would do, and, of course, I assented. My principal regret in the whole affair was for him. The *U. P. Magazine* lived in the smaller church and the *Union Mag.* died in the larger. It is humbling, no doubt, but not so bitter as you might imagine. My secret feeling was one of relief. It is quite possible it may be revived within a measurable time. . . .

To Rev. C. Jerdan

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Aug. 4, 1904.

MY DEAR MR. JERDAN,—I was at Whithorn ten days ago, and then four days at Lamlash. This week, like most men, I have been unable to settle down to anything.

That dreadful Decision.[1] My heart has been very sore for our brethren. I don't know whom I am most sorry for. The minority is as much to be pitied as the majority. They have brought on themselves an impossible task. The judges have made themselves ridiculous, for their decrees cannot be carried out. It seems to me it is they who have overleaped the saddle. They would have done more if they had tried less. And it puts the Established Church in a curious position. They have notoriously abandoned the Confession of Faith. If they approve Halsbury's decision, they must, as honourable men, surrender their benefits too. And what gospel have the minority got to

[1] The Judges of the House of Lords had by a majority reversed the decision of all the Scottish Courts, and had stripped the United Free Church of all the property and endowments that belonged to the Disruption section at the Union of 1900.

preach now? The minute they offer Christ to every man they unchurch themselves. Some texts have been in my mind all week. Jesus said unto them (Emmaus) 'What things?' Then that one in Esther: 'The king and Haman sat down to eat and drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.'

Mr. Grant took part in our prayer-meeting last evening. He was greatly put about on Monday—had to lay down his pen—couldn't write.

I see you were at the meeting in Edinburgh. You should write down all that happened at it. A time will come, please God, when you will all be able to rejoice over what has happened, and it will be good to have a faithful picture of that solemn scene. You will have your hands full of work, and your heart full of care for a long time.—Believe me, my dear Mr. Jerdan, yours and your brethren's,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Rev. C. Jerdan

(*On the occasion of Mr. Jerdan's second marriage.*)

20 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Feb. 21, 1905.

MY DEAR MR. JERDAN,—This is a day of good tidings, and I must not hold my peace. You have done *well* and WISELY. I am sure of that. Whatever my poor blessing may be worth, you and Miss A—— C—— both have it, and will have it. Please give her my most humble duty and my most true and warm congratulations. Everybody knows the C——s come of a good stock. I take it, my dear Mr. Jerdan, as a singularly high honour and a very sure proof of your friendship that you have told me yourself, and in such a way, such great and solemn news. Tell Miss A. that you are not quite perfect yet—far from it!—and she has an uphill task before her; but it is *up*hill, and that 's everything—up to the land of 'milk and honey,'[1] and that 's a good land! And I must tell her some of your

[1] The title of one of Mr. Jerdan's books.

faults—whenever I can find them out myself. My heart goes out to you both to-day in a way I cannot put in words. I don't know which of you two should be the happier. I am, my dear Mr. Jerdan, yours and hers, very, very gladly, and very, very, very enviously, J. P. STRUTHERS.

I 'll take the class with special delight on Sabbath.

To Rev. E. F. H. Capey

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Aug. 10, 1906.

MY DEAR MR. CAPEY,—That touching little note of yours and the intimation in the magazine did go to my heart.[1] I have often anticipated a similar hour and its announcement for myself, and have felt that the loosening of my own little load would be a sore wrench to me. I am very, very sorry that your reason is ill-health, which means more and worse than you have had, and how great that has been in past days you once told me. I hope your health even yet may improve.

It is a great anxiety being an editor. One never has the burden off, and yet from how much indolence it has saved us both, and how many good friends it has made us! . . .

May God give you a still wider door and a bigger blessing.
—Yours, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Dr. Denney

GREENOCK, *Sept.* 3, 1906.

. . . I HAVE been reading a whole Psalm to my people every Sabbath afternoon for two years now, and am within one of the 119th. I mean to read it all in one day, but I wish to say something before I read it. I wish to point out its glory, and I want you first of all to point it out to me in two or three sentences. You must have thought about it. Put me on the right lines. I had to read it once every forenoon and once every afternoon in the metre as

[1] Mr. Capey's 'Farewell' as editor of *Young People*.

a child before I was allowed out to play one summer, for six weeks; and I said it off by heart one Sabbath evening. The following night a man—he afterwards made shipwreck—called on us, and he was told of my feat. 'What 's the thirty-third verse?' he said. And that—or rather his triumphant look at my failure—gave me a crushed feeling I have never got over. One or two men whom I know have told me that they enjoy reading a chapter or a whole book as much as they would enjoy the week's *Punch*. I confess with shame I still love a short chapter, and would take up *Punch* at the end of it with a feeling of pleasure that seems, if not of superior quality, of at least decidedly greater quantity. Now, give me one or two sentences about the 119th Psalm, like a good fellow.

For three Sabbath afternoons I have read my sermons. I felt I was talking in a slip-shod way, and I thought it would do both me and my people good. It feels queer, and I don't think the best of them care for it. A good many feel I must have some other reason. Mental breakdown, *e.g.* Forgive my troubling you.—Yours,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Rev. E. F. H. Capey

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Dec. 18, 1906.

MY DEAR MR. CAPEY,—Your *Young People* is such a handsome volume, and so rich and good every way, that I am ashamed to look at my own miserable little production, and blush to send it to you.

But why, why did you hoist me up so high? It was good of you, so good that it almost made me cry. You meant well, but I fear you have lowered yourself intellectually in my estimation. Your farewell is very solemn and very beautiful in every way. You must feel queer with that burden off your back, or that joy out of your life—just like a widow. I hope your strength is to be saved for some other enterprise. I hope we shall meet some day.—I am, my dear Mr. Capey, yours gratefully, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mrs. Murdoch

40 Eldon St., Greenock,
Jan. 7, 1907.

My dear Mrs. Murdoch,—You must have spent a little fortune on cakes for me. This last, like the others, is a beauty. I wonder if Elijah ever got the widow of Zarephath to make him one half as good. *I* live in a happier era.

One of the Snell men was telling me to-day that Mrs. Edward Caird told him one day lately that the chair her husband was sitting in belonged to Jebb, and he had bought it at Lushington's sale. . . .

To Dr. Denney

(*On receiving a wedding gift from Dr. and Mrs. Denney.*)

40 Eldon St., Greenock,
May 4, 1907.

My dear Professor,—If you were ever up in the crow's nest of a whaler trying to find a path through the ice, and watching the floes closing in behind you, then you can judge how I feel, with all the furniture of my house in two rooms, trying to get to my desk by day and my bed by night; or, to use an experience more likely to be familiar to you—moving men on a draught-board, only each man has to be replaced; and *revocare gradus*, that 's the bother. This envelope—you can see by its griminess—has lain addressed on my table for a month. We mean to go to Oxford, and were hoping you might be the preacher in Mansfield. But alack-a-day! you are to be far off upon the sea.

I have so much to thank you for! Mrs. Denney's ink-stand is a most beautiful bit of workmanship, only it will make my other chattels ashamed. And a Homer from Denney! It 's like owning me to be a scholar—one of you! If any one hints at mental deficiency, I shall say, '*Circumspice!*'

A. and I are both pretty old, and yet when our way seemed opened up we thought it right after more than

twenty years waiting to go on. Some think the way was opened up long ago, but we didn't, and it may be we were wrong. You will give us both a moment now and again in your thoughts when you are on the waste of waters, and in that far country. You are never long out of my mind. . . . Yours ever, most gratefully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

May 20 is the day, if all 's well.

CHAPTER XVI

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER-DIARY

1902–1906

'Letters which point the events of life are always worth keeping.'—BISHOP THOROLD.

'We must not study comfort; they that go to the front of the battle get the blessing; the skulkers get no blessing.'
—REV. WILLIAM CHALMERS BURNS.

Saturday, Jan. 25, 1902.—Twenty years ago to-day since I left Whithorn. Other twenty and I 'll be —— ? Snowing heavily just now. Funeral at three of a poor ignorant lad whom I was asked to visit this week. 'Had heard about Jesus Christ, but didn't know much about Him.'

Jan. 27.—At the funeral the lad's mother was lying drunk on the floor. Another woman, a neighbour, also very bad. I ordered her out, and for the next fifteen minutes during the service she was cursing me on the stair-landing—said I was no minister. 'God curse him. Let me in to see the dead boy. I was the first to streak him, and I 'll be the last to see him afore his coffin closes,' and so on. I called last night on both families, and was very kindly received.

When I found my £20 last week that I thought was lost, I gave £2 of it to the London Missionary Society. They have a number of men ready to go, and no money to send them. It is Livingstone's and Gilmour's Society. I hope you don't disapprove ?

May 22.—I am liking 'Romans' immensely, understanding as I never did before, and never tried to before, the argument. And I think the people like it too. I have two good books—one is Denney's *Commentary*, the other is

Bishop Moule's—it is a rare book. I have also Hodge, which I don't look at, and Chalmers' volumes, which I mean to glance at. Too many commentaries are not good for one.

May 31, 1902.—I am still enjoying 'Romans' at the prayer-meeting, and I was terribly afraid I shouldn't. It is the famous eighth chapter next night. It is almost too grand a chapter to expound. I shall just read it, and tell one or two incidents about some of the verses. I have a good many illustrations of that sort jotted down in my Bible.

June 21, 1902.—I was at some school exams. this week. At one of them I sat beside R——. There was a bonnie lassie dressed in scarlet, with a black feather. I said, 'Look at Mephistopheles.' One or two of the pupils had given recitations. Judge of my surprise when she stood out and recited 'The Ballad of Susie Kay!'[1] At night, when I was asking some young men at the station not to go for a drink as they were proposing to do, one of them, a young chap, who had had some drink, said to the others, 'Don't heed that blethering auld man wi' naething in his heid.'

July 18, 1902.—My garden is in good order, all except one corner. Any amount of roses. I gave away a great many at my gate to Glasgow Fair folks. I went out to give some to a man and woman and four children, and found I had married them fifteen years ago!

Aug. 1, 1902.—Our local newspaper has its annual sneer at ministers choosing a month with five Sabbaths for their holiday. . . . I went out this afternoon to speak to a drunk man and his companion. He was staggering and going near the water's edge. He had only one eye. He was leaning over the Esplanade railing, and taking off his coat. He said he could swim—would swim me for a bob, he was all right. I told him he was not very fit for another

[1] Written by J. P. S.

world. 'Well,' he said, 'I 'm perhaps as fit as you are.' 'Maybe,' I said. 'My friend,' he said, 'don't say "maybe" when it 's a question of the road to glory; let there be no "maybes" about it, but "certainly"!' And that was my text in the open air (on the Esplanade) two weeks ago. The word 'convenient' should not be in our vocabulary when we talk of Salvation.

Aug. 1, 1902.—L. G. called. He and his wife went to Austria for their honeymoon—Innsbruck, then Vienna, and then Budapest. His best man was W. P. Kerr, of Glasgow, who is Fellow of All Souls, Oxford. You know it 's the swellest of all fellowships to have. An All Souls Fellow was required to be—'bene natus, bene vestitus, moderate doctus'—well born, well dressed, and a fairish scholar.

I am using my odd moments at the big sheet with famous Scotsmen's names and their ages and date of death. The sheet is of thick drawing paper, five feet broad, and eight feet long. I got the bills for the coloured letters for nothing. I 'll put a nice sentence at the top and bottom. I think it will look well. The martyrs are in red letters, the others in blue, and in smaller letters under some of them I shall put a characteristic saying. The first is Patrick Hamilton, of whom it was said—'His reek infected as many as it did blow upon.' It takes a lot of work clipping out the letters. I have it nailed up on the wall of my spare bedroom.[1]

Sept. 1902.—I have been asked to write the Annual Temperance Tract for the teetotal Glasgow folks. £3 fee for the copyright—120,000 copies. Dr. Stalker, Dr. Wells, and Mr. Meyer have done it. But I haven't time. I must keep all my ideas for our own little magazine.

Sept. 15, 1903.—I had six meetings on Sabbath. Prison in the morning. I did not know until after I was done that a man and woman were there who had starved a little child

[1] When completed, the sheet was mounted and hung in the Church Hall, where it still attracts much interest.

to death. Twenty of my young folks climbed Ben More yesterday, and had a rare view. I would have gone, but a guard, an old member of my congregation, died in his van, having filled in his last entry at Kilmarnock—the express to Dumfries. He had a nice wife, and I baptized all their children. The fare to Carlisle, being an autumn holiday, was only 4s., and as I would have gone the pleasure trip, I felt bound to go to his funeral. About seventy or eighty women at it, and three or four men. The wife seemed immensely pleased at my coming. I went to afternoon service in the Cathedral.

I sent off my last instalment of —— —— ——'s salary—£20. Sent £50 a month ago; £200 last year. I promised two years' salary, £264; so that is £6 over my promise. I was at a missionary meeting in the Congregational church five weeks ago. A minister was there who had seen my name in the Report, against £200. He said, 'We all know how generous Mr. S.'s congregation has been in subscribing £200. It was in his name, but it is from them.' Of course I said nothing.

April 1, 1904.—I ought to tell you I have been twice at our smallpox hospital—once last week and once this. I have left an old overcoat there, and, of course, I am as careful as I can be. I asked Dr. Wallace's advice. It did seem pitiful that it should be said nobody but the priests went. I hope God will keep me from harm, or from harming others. I don't tell any one, because people would object; and yet, if no minister went, it would be said Protestants never go. The patients seemed very glad to see me, and also the nurses, the latter all Protestants. Most of the patients were Romanists at the beginning; half of them are now, and there are about one hundred and thirty five altogether. It is a pitiful sight. I can understand our Lord shuddering when He touched the leper. The priest goes almost every day—an old man. Dr. Wallace also, every forenoon. I think it was my duty, and I 'm sure you 'll be rather pleased.

April 6.—You 'll be in Lisbon now. Our feelings must be very much what they will be when we are separated by death—thinking a great deal—thinking no end of one another, and yet having no definite news, but knowing all is well, and that when we meet there will be so much to say.

And where are you now? I 've lost trace of you altogether—a pretty state of matters. I feel just like a widower—only in that case I would know exactly where you were!

April 11.—A woman with whom I prayed in the small-pox hospital on Friday died next day. She was pretty ill when I saw her. Her husband was also there, but his is a mild case. I somehow feel as if I had been justified in going. I have got another man to take my place at the House of Refuge this week, as I know the Committee would object to my going.

April 11, 1904.—Went last night to the Prisoners' Home, but it didn't suit them to have me, so I treated myself to Sir A. Sullivan's oratorio in Dr. Macmillan's church—*The Prodigal Son.* The libretto is cleverly made up. When the younger son goes to a far country he quotes Ecclesiastes—'There is nothing better than to eat and to drink, eat and drink.' Then the chorus sing, 'Let us eat and drink—eat and drink, to-morrow we die—to-morrow we die.'

June 1, 1904.—I have to conduct service in the jail on Sabbath morning and one on the Esplanade in the evening. That makes five services, which is too much for me now. The chaplain of the prison is taking the place of a Dumbarton minister who was married yesterday. I couldn't refuse.

June 15, 1904.—The Edinburgh Protestant Institute are having lectures in some of the towns next winter, and they offered me £12 for four in Greenock, but I don't like payment for that kind of work, and I have more than I can do.

I have said 'No,' but have suggested two names. I fancy we ought to do anything like that for nothing.

Saturday, July 17, 1904.—I have had a lot of kind words to-day (Glasgow Fair Saturday) from people who lifted the roses I stuck outside my garden wall. Many of them Glasgow folks. I don't try to see them, but when I have gone out with a new lot, I have found folks hesitating and very much surprised. One lonely man about my own age was putting a red rose in his buttonhole when I opened the door. 'Some one's taking roses,' he said. 'He's very welcome,' I replied; 'they are meant to be taken.' 'Well it's very considerate,' he said. He was a Glasgow man and just got away in the afternoon.

Sabbath, July 31, 1904.—Last day of summer. Rain and lightning to-night. To-morrow the House of Lords give their decision on the Free Church case. I am very anxious, though it was said in Edinburgh on Thursday the U.F. Church would win. Then the Lords will have the Licensing Bill this week. That means a load on the nation's neck that won't easily be undone. And what may happen at Port Arthur?

Monday, Aug. 1.—The decision is against your Church. What a lot of hopes and joys and prayers all buried and 'sealed and made as sure as they could'—but God sits in Heaven, and some angel will roll away the stone. O God, bring good out of evil, for Christ's sake. Amen. I'm *awfully* sorry about the Lords' decision. Our little Church has had a lot of that kind of thing to stand, and we had not even the sympathy of numbers, so I can feel for the U.F. Church to-night. Don't be vexed—all will come well.

Wednesday, Aug. 3, 1904.—One cannot think of anything else but the Decision this week. People are all amazed, and don't know what to say or what is to be done. The *Herald* spoke very wisely—to one's astonishment. The

Scotsman very cruel and bitter, attacks Dr. Rainy, says he strove for over twenty years to disestablish and disendow the Established Church and had only succeeded in disendowing his own. It says Dr. Rainy will have all the blame to bear. It is enough to overwhelm him. What the U.P.'s will do I don't know, but I fear many of them will feel as if they had taken shares in a fine paying concern, and then discovered that instead of getting 15 per cent. they had a call to face of £5000 a share. It 's dreadfully vexing, and will, I fear, drive many out of the Church. Quite a number of laymen are saying, 'Serve the ministers right; they never consulted us.'

Thursday, Aug. 4, 1904.—We had a nice meeting last evening, a number of U.F. people there, all in perplexity. Mr. Grant was there and said a few words, and prayed and gave out a psalm—all very solemnly. Our chapter was 1 John iii. I said it was not the one we would have chosen, and yet, coming up in the ordinary course, it was after all a suitable one. It took us right into the Holy of Holies and brought us face to face with the eternal decree. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and *such we are.*' That 's in the R.V.—'such we are,' though it doesn't look like it.

I am thinking of taking for my text on Sabbath, 'Thou shouldst not have looked on thy brother in the day of his disaster.' There are many who are laughing and saying, 'Aha, aha! The church in the wilderness.' It will do the U.F. Church good. Many of them see they were not a little cruel to the Free Presbyterians. They were rather cruel to our little Cameronian Kirk. The F.C. was so big and strong it feared no evil, and now it has become like one of us. I 'm sorry, sorry, with all my heart, for it will in some ways injure our Lord's cause. I 'm sorry for the little party which has taken on it a task it can't perform. If Christ's cause is dear to them, they must be in distress to-day, and I 'm sorry for the Judges.

Saturday, Sept. 17, 1904.—I began Revelation at the prayer-meeting on Wednesday. It should take up five months to the end of February. I began the Old Testament May 1885. That will be almost twenty years: I didn't take up the Psalms, and I did the Song of Solomon in one night; and I sometimes took two chapters. I agreed to preach in the U.F. Gaelic Church here to-morrow night—much against my will otherwise, but I wished to show my goodwill to them. This has been a lovely day. My carnations getting past their best. I had eighty sweet-pea blooms, but this will be their last week. I have a lot of chrysanthemums. I have supplied the church since May 22,—forty-four lilies that day. I often put flowers out in a crevice in the Esplanade wall. The other day some one wrote 'Thank you' under it.

Saturday, Dec. 31, 1904.—Good-bye for 1904, and yet not for 1904, for it is still ours, and we 'll go back on it in Eternity, and find out what it really was to us. Lord Jesus Christ, complete and correct our prayers, and fill up our praises till they be worthy of Thy Father's acceptance; to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost, our Guide, be everlasting praise and glory. Amen.

Jan. 14, 1905.—I got on pretty well on the whole in the Town Hall. A lady told me there was a fine young man sat beside her that night. She asked him if he had been at any of the evening meetings. He said, 'No, I 've only been an hour in Greenock.' He had landed from his ship, had gone to the P.O. for letters, asked if there was anything on, was told there was a meeting in the Town Hall, and came to it. The lady said she would send him a volume of the *Morning Watch*. I asked leave to do it, and wrote him a letter. (He was a Captain Monck of the *Gertrude*—Macdonald Line.)

A man stopped me last night, and asked if I remembered him. I had stopped him at the door of a public-house last New Year's Day, when he was drunk. He said he had

never tasted drink since. He had not had a chance of speaking to me since, but he had often told the story. It pleased me very much. I hope it was true.

Wednesday, Feb. 22, 1905. 7.50 P.M.—(In my little room before going in to church.) O God, I thank Thee for permitting me to go through Thy word at the prayer-meeting. Bless us this last night.

Feb. 28, 1905.—To-morrow evening I begin another twenty years' journey through the Bible. I crossed this Jordan with my staff twenty years ago, and now I am crossing it again—still with my staff. I wonder if I 'll live to complete it ? Nearly seventy-four then ! To-night at worship we read the words, ' The time that the Ark was at Kirjath-Jearim was long—even twenty years.' So that God Himself counts that long. That comforts me.

March 1, 1905.—I begin Genesis to-night, and feel it is a solemn thing. I hope it is evening and morning with us, the last best.

March 15, 1905.—The letters in our local paper about useless old ministers have been very cruel. Would we be able to retire and live in a wee, wee house ? I would do the cooking seeing you can't !

March 16, 1905.—Am asked to give a lecture in St. Peter's next winter. The only subject I think of is the ' Humour of the Bible.' Or would that be misunderstood ? I don't mean to jest about the Bible, and I don't like jests about texts—but it 's a fine subject.

July 1905.—I couldn't have gone to the Australian match in any case, but it argues a big difference in me that I didn't want to.

Sabbath, Sept. 23, 1905.—I have to speak about Samuel's farewell address to-day. Last night I took up a volume of sermons of Jonathan Edwards. He wrote a famous

book on the Freedom of the Will. When he had been twenty-three years a minister he and his people quarrelled and he was dismissed. The last sermon in the book is his farewell sermon on that occasion. Looking at his *Life* this morning in an American encyclopædia, I found that in the first Sabbath of his last year his text was—'This year thou shalt die.' The encyclopædia says he was fifty-four years five months seventeen days old when he died. One sees that minuteness on a child's grave, but never on a man's. But this is the odd thing—that is just my age this morning to a day! Queer? I like when I have lots of coincidences. That one about Jonathan Edwards' age could only happen once in a lifetime. This much is certain—God counts our days literally, and he is keeping a note of time. He will not mock us.

Sept. 26, 1905.—There 's a rather unkind letter against me in our local paper to-night. . . . It shows I have some enemies in the town, and some amongst those who listen to me. It doesn't put me in the least about, though I am sorry any one should take up that attitude to me. But whoever wrote it has so completely misunderstood things that it doesn't touch me.

Oct. 1905.—I hope you 'll back me in refusing a marriage gift. It 's hard on a congregation.

I went to the House of Refuge last evening, then to a man who had been drinking—poured out half a flask of whisky, waited till ten o'clock, when the shops shut, and took away his bank book.

Saturday, Dec. 30, 1905.—Had a letter from Fairley Daly to-day, telling me he had written to a lad in my congregation, asking him to go to Livingstonia. I am very glad. His name is John Struthers Howie, the first baby I baptized in Greenock. He was brought up a farmer, then was apprenticed joiner, and has been aiming at missionary work lately. It is a great joy to me. My name may come to honour yet.

Feb. 2, 1906.—What a lot of letters we have! Our married life cannot be a long one, and I sometimes think we are laying up letters for when you or I are left alone. We have had a rare nineteen years of mutual joy and trust. I often think I ought to burn all my sermons now. Nobody could make either head or tail of them. Only I would like first to copy the texts and dates; and often I have a note of something that has happened.

May 1906.—I sent out five Japanese Bibles to five men I met on board who gave me their cards. I sent a lily, pansy, and a bit of southernwood with each. I hope a blessing will go with them. I fell in with other eleven Japs to-day who gave me their names. I 'll send them each a Bible and some flowers, a pencil and writing paper. They were good to me when I passed through their country.

Aug. 1906.—Your letter has come,[1] and I am now going to open it. . . .

I am glad all 's well, that Hester has improved, that you have not been sick, that you have seen an iceberg, that you have steered an Atlantic liner! I think I told you about being asked to go to Port Elizabeth for six months?

What would you have said if, when you got home, you found I had been gone for a week, the *Watch* in print for two numbers, and then—to be closed!

Aug. 28, 1906.—They are hanging the electric lights from the roof of the church to-day—six copper chains. I happened to go in when they were putting up the first one. When the men were above the roof, putting in the last, their master put his foot through the ceiling. Running for plasterers and painters, and the clearing up of the mess kept me six hours. One of the deacons' wives had to wash the passages. It might have been ten times worse, and in an inaccessible place. They hoisted up a boatswain's chair —just like a swing—through the ventilator. I was glad no man was hurt all the time.

[1] From Canada.

Wednesday, Aug. 29.—There was a fine meeting to-night, and the light pleased everybody. The chapter in ordinary course was Exodus xxvii.—the altar of burnt-offering. It ends with directions about Aaron and the *lamps*. We sang four Psalms—rare ones—just made for the purpose.

Nov. 1, 1906.—I treated five Russian sailors to cakes, and took them to the Museum—and another seven to apples. They seemed very pleased.

Nov. 1906.—Letter from the English Church Army people—Lantern Department—wishing your pictures to make slides of! There 's honour for you. The envelope is addressed—'Rev. — Sturday. Ed. *M.W.*'

A woman in the jail who hid her face the three days I was there, turns out to be a woman who came to our church now and again sixteen or eighteen years ago. Two years ago she sent for me to come and see her in the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow. It seems she had learned to drink as a servant—drinking before she went to bed—and she stole while under the influence of it.

Nov. 1906.—I like talking about coincidences, because it gives one a chance of talking about God's love, though it is not a sermon. One feels glad one has made nothing by lecturing. One would like one's hire some other way.

Monday, Dec. 31, 1906.—I 've changed my subject of address for to-morrow (New Year's Day Service)—will take those words in Luke—'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.' We are launching out into the deep of a New Year. We would have the Lord Jesus direct our boat as He sees best, and whatever the net may bring up we will take at His hands. Let the last name we say to each other this year be the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XVII

SERMONS

'And this in an especial manner is required of us who are ministers, that we be not like a hand set up in crossways, directing others which way to go but staying behind itself.'
—JOHN OWEN.

UNDER date 19th August 1906 my husband wrote:

"I have just finished writing out my afternoon sermon. It is the first sermon I have ever written out word for word, and I mean to read it. I find I am getting slipshod, and I wish to see if my people do not listen better. My subject is rather an odd one. The beams of the little chambers round the temple of Solomon were not to be put *into* the wall, but were to rest on the ledges; the meaning being that we are not to make the stability of men, or anything temporary or human, a part of the fabric of God's temple. *E.g.*, you have heard people say they couldn't believe that a certain man would do wrong—if he did, their whole faith in God would be shattered. It 's a fine subject, and I 've been thinking of it all week."

Then on the evening of the day on which he preached this sermon he wrote:

"I read my sermon to-day for the first time in my life! I never had even a note in my Bible before. The folks looked a bit astonished, and certainly some of them for the first time slept none."

Several other such sermons, written out in full and delivered from the paper, followed that on the Temple

Rebatements, but, by common consent, those not read were preferred.

In this chapter are printed the first of the read sermons, and another from the same set, on a Pauline text.

Sermon on the Temple Rebatements

'For on the outside he made rebatements [narrowed rests] in the wall of the house round about, that the beams should not have hold in the walls of the house.'—1 Kings vi. 6.

Solomon's temple was built on the summit of one of the hills on which Jerusalem was built, on the place, according to Jewish tradition, where Abraham offered the ram caught in the thicket in place of Isaac his son; and certainly on the spot where David saw the angel with the drawn sword ready to destroy Jerusalem after one of David's great sins. The temple commemorated not the scene of victory, but the place of deserved judgment and pardoning mercy; it commemorated the glory not of man but of God only. This rocky summit on which it was built had first of all to be levelled, and the ground round about it had to be raised, so that there might be a huge platform, as it were, on which the temple might be built. That platform was at least as large as the whole area enclosed by the houses round Ardgowan Square. In parts the retaining walls were more than half the height of the Victoria Tower in Cathcart Square, many of the stones of which it was made being, as you know, between 30 to 40 feet long, and weighing from 50 to 100 tons.

The temple itself, the actual structure, was not what we would call a large building, being from end to end only 90 feet long, just the length of our own church buildings from the front to the back. It was 30 feet broad and 45 feet high. It consisted of two parts—the holy place, which was the size of this church, in which were the altar of burnt-offering, the altar of incense, and the table for shew-bread; and then at the western end, the most holy place, which was in shape a cube, 30 feet long, 30 feet broad

and 30 feet high. At the entrance to the holy place was a porch, 15 feet long, and in front of it two magnificent bronze pillars, 6 feet in diameter and 30 feet in height.

The temple, you will thus see, was quite a small building compared with many even in our own time, but the money lavished on its construction surpasses anything we read of in history. There are few buildings in the world at this present moment that have cost even two millions; I question if there is even one that could not be replaced for five millions, but this temple of Solomon's cost not simply millions, or tens of millions, but, according to the book of Chronicles, hundreds and hundreds of millions, for these were the days when the king made silver to be as stones in Jerusalem, or, as it is said in another passage which makes us smile, silver was *nothing accounted of* in the days of Solomon.

Round three of the sides of the temple—that is to say, the two sides and the back—there seems to have been another wall, built at a distance of eight feet or so from the wall of the temple, and the space between these two walls was divided into a series of little chambers or rooms. There were three storeys of these, the entrance to the two upper ones, as in every tenement in our town, being by winding stairs.

But, says our text, the joists that formed the floors and the roofs of these little rooms—and this is the subject I specially wish to talk about this afternoon—were not to be let into the wall of the temple. They were only to rest on what masons call rebatements, or, as you and I would say, on ledges. That is to say, the temple wall was of a certain thickness for the first 7 or 8 feet, or so, then there was a ledge, or step in, of 20 inches or thereby, and the wall continued at that reduced width for other 7 or 8 feet; and then there was another ledge of 20 inches, and a corresponding lessening of the width of the wall till the roof was reached. On these two ledges rested the beams or joists on which the flooring of the second and third storeys rested.

That seems at first sight a very small, and some would

say, a very trifling and unworthy, if not ridiculous, subject to preach about. But it was not too small a thing for God to think about, nor too small a thing for God to write about in His Own book, nor was it too small a thing for God to plan from all eternity, nor too small a thing for Him to make a pattern of and show to David in a solemn hour of vision. Any detail in the costliest and grandest building the world ever saw, or possibly ever may see, may well be of some interest to men and women who find a pleasure in beautiful and noble workmanship of any kind. Did not the stones of the temple built by Herod appeal to Christ's disciples ? and did not He Himself gaze at them alike with wonder and, as He thought of the destruction that awaited them, with sorrow, as He left the temple and its precincts for the last time that week on which He was to die ?

But when you think of what God meant the temple to be —the most solemn, the most striking, the most tremendous appeal God was to make to men to believe in His infinite majesty, His infinite holiness, His infinite love, till the time should come when He would send His Own Son in the flesh to dwell amongst them—I say, when you think of the temple as the last and grandest type of heaven, and the last and grandest type of Him who is the only and eternally begotten of the Father, he would surely be a bold man who would say, This verse might be worthy God's writing, and perhaps worthy our reading, but not worthy our thinking about.

And further, if you but think of this, that there are *many* things about the temple that you and I would have liked to know, many things and things of great importance, as for example, the very style of its architecture, the shape of its roof, the way in which that roof was supported, and so on, that are not told us, surely we may feel certain there was some wise reason, some great and loving purpose, in the mention of what seems at the first glance, and even at the second glance, a detail of little moment and small interest to us—' Thou shalt make narrowed rests, that the beams may not be fastened in the walls of the house.'

What then is the point God wished us to see when He wrote these words ?

Suppose one of you owned a beautiful house in the country and let it to a tenant or a friend, and that friend were to say to you, 'I want a place in which to store my garden tools, or a place to keep plants in ; I want to make an outhouse, a lean-to, for odds and ends, for the children to play in if it rains—do you object to my setting it up against the gable ? I 'll make it neat and I 'll keep it tidy and in good order. Do you object ? ' Well, I suppose, if we were in a good humour and could trust our friend's taste and his habits, we would say, 'I don't object, only you are not to make any holes in the wall of the house, or injure it in any way. You are not to damage the property. The shed, or outhouse, or lean-to, or whatever you call it, is not to be a fixture, but a thing that is removable, and easily removable, and removable at an hour's notice ; and when it is gone the place is to look as though it had not been there.'

The same principle governs *the inside* of our houses. Our landlords let us hang up pictures and ornaments, and even put shelves and brackets on our walls, but they say you must not damage the wall itself, or even the plaster, or the paper, or the paint ; you must not injure the fabric, you must leave the house in as good order as you got it.

The temple was to *be* and was to *look* 'exceeding magnifical.' It was to be the house of God, the gate of heaven. But it was to be also *a place of prayer* for all nations—our Father's house—and that same great God, who in the fulness of His love allows the swallow to found her a nest close by His Own altars, allowed all these little rooms to be built for His Own faithful priests and loving servants. They had no rooms in front ; they must not come between any man and God, but they were graciously permitted and commanded to have rooms that nestled close by His, they were to encompass Him round about, and there was to *be but a wall between them and Him.*

These rooms meant nearness, they meant fellowship,

they meant constant access to God. But they meant also *service*.

Every bit of land in our country is held, according to law, from the King. The ultimate tenure is from him—often only nominally, but sometimes really. There are lands, there are estates, there are dignities, and the man who holds them has to do a certain specified service every year —he may have to give the King at certain times a pair of hawks, or a gold cup, or a silver spur. If he fail to do so, his lands, his titles, are legally forfeited and may revert to the King who is supposed to have granted them at first.

So with those priests. Their right to be about their Father's *house* depended on their being continually about their Father's *business*. They were but tenants, removable if found bad; they were but workmen whose incompetence or idleness would be sufficient ground for immediate discharge. They were men whom God could do without, men whom He could replace, men for whom no successors need be found if He so willed it. Their candlestick was one that could be removed, their crown one that might fade away; at *any* instant, if they were found unworthy, the sentence might be passed—their bishoprick let another take—let him go to *his own place*.

And some of you will remember how in the years that were to come the furniture, the household goods, of men were cast out of these very chambers, men themselves chased from the house of God, and others put out of the priesthood. But the foundation of God would still stand sure. His throne is an everlasting one and His kingdom one that hath no end.

A little thought will show us that the principle that underlies the statement in the text has many applications. We are to let nothing that is purely personal, purely temporal, purely human, endanger the house, the throne, the glory, of God.

Take three illustrations of what I mean.

You and I sometimes become discontented with God's dealings with ourselves or others. We see a lad of promise

die, the only son of his mother. We see, as in a famous case in Edinburgh some years ago, a man, after years of preparation, mount the pulpit and preach one sermon about the love of Christ, and go home to die. We see a missionary lost at sea on his first setting out. We see a young bride returning from her honeymoon a widow. We see a statesman, as men call him, drag a country into war; we see thousands of brave men slain, we see thousands of Rachels refusing to be comforted, and the man who brings all that about stalks unabashed throughout the land, fêted and honoured; we see a ruler wade through blood and still continue to be king, and we are tempted to say, Can there be knowledge of these things in the Most High?

Or—to come to a lower level and to smaller matters—we are defrauded by a friend, disappointed of a legacy, cheated by a lodger, or a customer, or some other debtor; abused by some ingrate whom we have helped; and instantly we say, There 's no justice in the world.

Or, again, we may be poor and we see others rich; unmarried, lonely, while others have husband, wife, and child. We have ill-health, are never one day without pain, have sleepless nights and living sorrows; we have a trouble that makes us a horror to the few from whom we cannot hide it, and a source of perplexity and irritation to those to whom we cannot tell it.

Or—to come to a still lower level—we have three days' holiday, while another has six weeks', and during our three days we never see the sun till we are entering the train that is to carry us back to our tale of bricks. 'Such weather,' said a man in a letter I got one day lately, 'I never saw in any summer. I have only had a few dry blinks, and during these I was literally unable to go out because I had been drenched so thoroughly and so repeatedly immediately before that I had nothing decent in which I could go out.' And then he adds, 'It is enough to make even a good man pause and think.'

We have all spoken that way, and what does it come to but simply this—we are questioning God's love? We let

our momentary disappointment, our temporary trial and sorrow, blind us to God's eternal love, to the thousand mercies we have never noticed or noticed only to *forget* them, because we always had them and never missed them. We treat our view of things, our hopes, our fears, our desires, our longings, as if they were essential to God's eternal plan and even to His existence and His character. And what is that but fastening the beams of our little chambers into the walls of our God's holy place? Is not Job's attitude the right one, 'Though He *slay me*, yet will I trust in Him'?

Take a second illustration. Do we not sometimes give some man too big a place in our view of things? I do not know if it is as common a thing to say as it used to be—I hope it is not, for it is even more foolish than it is wrong—but people have said of some man—some minister, some elder, some father or mother—I can't believe that person could do a wrong thing. I say that is a *fearful* thing to say—it is pinning our faith on man, that faith that can rest only in God. And our God is a jealous God. His glory He will *not* give to another, neither His praise to ministers, or parents, or any other graven image that you or I may set up. Cursed is the man that putteth confidence in man, or maketh flesh his arm. You must *not* fasten the beams of any man's house or character into the walls of that city that rests on the one tried, elect, precious corner-stone. You must never say of any man—no matter who he be—that he and God stand or fall together.

Take a third illustration. Men sometimes put some doctrine, some *principle*, as they call it, some belief, some custom, some tradition, as if it were on a level with the great essentials of the Christian faith. There are—blessed be God—essentials, and there are things—blessed be God—that are non-essentials, even in doctrine, but still more in questions purely of order and discipline. I have known people—good people, not people who simply thought themselves good, but people who had a good report of all men and of the truth itself also—who would not enter a church

because the people in it sat at prayer; or because they stood when they sang. Now, even supposing both these things were sinful, and suppose—and a very fearful supposition it is—that a man can only pray standing or kneeling, and dare never sing the praise of God when he is on his feet—that the moment he begins to bless God, or, in the language of the 103rd Psalm, calls upon angels to bless God with him, he must first secure a seat, if not for them at least for himself—but the supposition is simply monstrous. Is attitude an essential part of salvation? A few years ago many people were vexed and many were humiliated to read that Dr. Phillips Brooks, one of the greatest preachers in America, found himself unable to preach because he had no gown, and, when a gown was fetched, was still unable to preach because he was a man over six feet in height and the gown had been made for a very little man. To say that I cannot have fellowship with other Christians unless they sit when I sit and stand when I stand; still more, to say that I cannot have fellowship with my Saviour unless in one exercise I stand and in another sit—what is that but building wood, hay, stubble, on the Rock of Ages, fastening the beam of my little cell in the walls of God's Jerusalem? What is it but saying that Christ is dead in vain unless you sit or stand as your fathers did, or rather as one or two generations of them did during the last three hundred years?

Or take a matter of feeling. I was advising a woman some time ago to go to a certain church. 'No,' she said, 'I 'm only a servant, as they say, and if I were to enter that church you speak of, the ladies would draw in their skirts.' And I confess the way she made the gesture convinced me it was one she had either practised herself or seen others practise. 'No,' she said, 'enter that church I never shall.' What could I say? I might have said, 'I thought you had greater self-respect than you seem to have—you, a servant, with better food, with a happier home, with a finer training for all that fits a woman for a woman's noblest work, with greater opportunities of making many happy,

with fewer temptations to tell lies and speak flattering words than any girl who stands behind a counter—I thought you had greater self-respect than to heed a sneer of one who spoke without thinking.' But might I not also have said ?—' Do you tell me there is any woman in that church who would do so ? That is bad news ; let me now tell you good news. Christ will spread His skirt over you. Is not that more than amends for the biggest insult any one could pour on you ? Will you make one woman's momentary pique or jealousy or thoughtlessness—the outcome it may be of disappointment or bitterness of soul—overbalance the invitation or outweigh the command of the Son of God who loved you from all eternity and died upon the cross for you ? Will you build a little beam—a little mote—like that into the fabric of the Eternal Love ? '

I have read my sermon this afternoon for the first time in my life, by way of experiment—if I have any knowledge of my own heart, partly for your good, and partly for my own. But I have known good people who would have risen and walked out of the church if they had been present this afternoon, and would have refused to enter it again unless I publicly apologised for doing this. Nay, I have known them distrust and dislike a man all his days because in his timidity he kept his eyes fastened on the Bible and they imagined he was reading. They could read plenty of sermons at home, they would tell you. Yes, but they couldn't read the one that was written for them ; and they couldn't join with the saints in prayer at home or in the Psalms of David, they couldn't proclaim before the world their reverence for the Lord's day and the house of prayer —these and many, many other things that make the Sabbath what it is, they could *not* do at home. Yet there they would stay and sleep and idle and mourn. And what is that but putting a little matter on which they have not spent ten minutes' honest thought on a level with the express command of God and the example of His Son our Lord ?

Our text represents the priests as at most but lodgers, tenants at will, outsiders. And in strange contrast with that, in the chapter we read at the prayer-meeting, we are told of the angels, the cherubim of glory, that they not only have a place outside the temple, but even inside the most holy place, and on the holiest spot in all that place. They sit upon the very mercy-seat, and more than that, as the R.V. shows us—of *one piece with the mercy-seat* shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. Oh what boldness of access is there! Oh what concord! Oh what fellowship! Oh what oneness! Meantime, for a little, you and I are lower than the angels, and often far, far from them, and far from God, so that Christ may sometimes well say to us—'What have *I* to do *with thee?* Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of man. Get thee behind me, Satan.'

But there are moments, too, and there are parts of my being, and parts of my life and parts of my thought and experience, when I come very close to Him, when I can grip the horns of the altar and kneel at the foot of the mercy-seat in humble faith that will take no denial,—moments when I can lean my head upon His very breast and put questions He *must* answer—moments when I thrust my hand into the hole in His side—moments when I can say, Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? —moments when I can say, My life is hid with Christ in God, my life is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord my God. The winds may blow and the rain descend, and the floods beat upon my house, but fall it never shall, for I have digged deep and built upon a Rock. Christ is mine and I am His, and in a little I shall be no longer a buttress outside the wall, nor even a pillar before the porch, but I shall be caught up and made a pillar in the house of my God, a pillar in that temple of which the glory is the Lamb Himself. His name shall be on my forehead. I shall see no longer His back parts, but His face. I shall go no more out. I shall be for ever with the Lord.

Sermon on Man's Judgment and God's Judgment

'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment.'—1 Cor. iv. 3.

When any of us is wronged, or fancies he is wronged, the first thing he naturally thinks of doing is to take revenge, to strike back, to give tit for tat, an eye at least for an eye, and not less than one tooth for a tooth, and more if possible. And as there are always many who are eager for a fight between others, there is no lack of advisers to remind us of our rights, and of what they would fondly have us call our duties. They reinforce our passion and add a fuel that costs them nothing to our fire. Have you no spirit—no spunk? Are you going to take it lying down? Are you willing to let anybody and everybody trample on you? Where is your Highland blood?—your British pluck? Have you forgotten your country's emblem, the Scottish thistle and its magnificent and defiant, though perhaps unfortunately slightly unscriptural, motto, *Nemo me impune lacessit*—the man that tramples on me will pay for it? If *I* were *you*—and there is much virtue in an *if* like that—I would spend my last penny and assert my rights and prove myself a *man*. Such an adviser's only regret is that unfortunately he is unable to share the expense—if he had been rich he would have lifted his last penny—but he will do what he can, that is to say, he will enjoy watching the fight, and of course will be no sufferer if you win—it is only fair that your backers should share the spoils; and if you lose he will, provided he has not meanwhile disappeared, sympathise with you and tell you that might invariably triumphs over right; or perhaps he will be your critic and show you at what point of the battle you made a fatal mistake—as he only too clearly foresaw. But meantime you can issue your challenge and indulge in those preliminary prancings that are common among savages—and most warfare has a savage element, indeed it is not easy to keep it out—the preliminary prancings in which, as in a boy's preliminary dives on his way to the bathing

place, courage has been sometimes known wholly to evaporate.

The first and most natural impulse, I say, when one is insulted, is to the policy of revenge. But there are other, and no doubt wiser counsellors, who bid us never mind. What does it matter? they say; don't heed him; the man that has wronged you is not worth your powder and shot. Say nothing. Let him alone. Take no notice. Treat him, as you can well afford to do, with the contempt he deserves.

And at first sight that seems to be the policy recommended in this verse by Paul: 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment.' Paul here seems to say that he does not care for *any* man's hostile judgments, no, nor for *all* men's hostile judgment. Here is no 'Athanasius contra mundum'—here is not one man against the world, with his back against the wall—here rather is one who just 'jouks' and lets the world go by—'A very small thing to be judged of any man's judgment.' There is a splendid daring, a magnificent recklessness, heroic indifference to the universe, that for a moment captivates one's attention and almost takes one's breath away. But the very magnificence of it somehow makes one suspicious. Does Paul really mean to say what the words apparently undoubtedly imply—that what any one man thinks of him, or what all men put together think of him, is a *very little thing*? The words of the text seem to mean that we do well to treat opponents with contempt. And the world would give many reasons for that.

First of all, the man, your enemy, your critic, your hostile judge, is a fool; a fool, if not by nature, at least by dint of labour and consummate achievement. If he wasn't born a fool, he has made himself one: as such you are justified in treating him; and there are many ways of doing that.

The best way—that is, the most cutting and effective way, the most annihilating way—is absolute silence—

silent contempt, we call it. But that needs rare self-control. It means that one must not betray by word or sign any consciousness even of the existence of your victim. There 's no pomp or pageantry in that kind of war. There is no field of battle, no drawing out the hosts, no sound of great guns or artillery. It is like shooting with an air-gun from behind a fence, or letting fly an arrow in the dusk. It is like killing by a blow that leaves no mark; the victim bleeds internally. And there is no song of victory, no conqueror's gazette or bulletin, for there never had been, apparently, a state of war. The winner in that fight must wait—it may be for years—till some other discovers the dead body in the bush, and then the world finds out the masterly manœuvre and applauds the conqueror's skill and the conqueror's reticence.

But human nature likes to draw blood, and to see blood; it loves to see a victim publicly compelled to own defeat. And in most cases, therefore, when we say we mean to treat a man or thing with the silent contempt he deserves, we break the silence by just proclaiming it. Take two instances of this from the life of Sir Robert Peel, given in the *Autobiography* of the late Duke of Argyll. The first was uttered in reply to an attack made on him by Disraeli. 'Sir,' said Peel, addressing the Speaker, 'I will not waste the time of the House in making any reply to the venomous attacks of the hon. member.' 'Here the word "venomous,"' says the Duke, 'was pronounced with emphasis, and with a peculiar curling of the lips which was very expressive of intense contempt.'

'Another time,' says the Duke, 'he treated Disraeli with a lofty and a due disdain.' 'The hon. gentleman,' said Peel, 'frequently and feelingly complains that I won't condescend to bandy personalities with him. . . . Every man has a right to determine for himself with whom he will descend into the arena of personal contest.'

It is more usual, however, to express and to glory in expressing the contempt we feel. A member of Parliament

once said of something or other that it did not appeal to his mind. 'Sir,' said Disraeli, 'the hon. member says the argument does not appeal to what he is pleased to term his mind.'

Take an example from his great rival, one who in another way was a master of words. A member of Parliament laughed one day offensively or untimeously when Mr. Gladstone was speaking, whereupon he turned towards his interrupter and said, 'Sir, I would advise the hon. member to endeavour to punctuate his laughter with an idea.' That 's neat—just like the other—but is it like Paul?

Take another example. It was at a great meeting in Edinburgh, and a citizen, whom no one had ever treated wholly as a fool before, put a question which Mr. Gladstone did not wish to answer. That great orator might have said so, but turning to the aged man he said, tapping his own forehead, 'I am responsible for what God has put in *here*, but not for what He has put in *there*.' That was not neat, and I imagine most even of the great audience whom it convulsed felt it to be brutal—there was more than a touch of brutality in it.

Was it fair of Queen Elizabeth, speaking of Philip of Spain, to say, 'I shall never be afraid of a man who took ten years to learn his alphabet'? Yet can we distinguish language like that from Paul's word, 'With me it is a very little thing to be judged of you or of man's judgment'?

That is the first thing we say—The man is a fool; he 's not worth heeding; nobody pays any attention to what he says; he has contradicted himself a score of times already; you are not the first he has attacked. Remember the motto engraven on the old house as you go up to Stirling Castle—'They say—what say they?—let them say.'

But then, if we are worldly-wise, we add, in the second place: Suppose he could hurt you; suppose it does harm you, very few will ever hear of it. The world is a big world, and your world is a very little one. You think your character is smirched, blasted, ruined, and that all the world is talking of you. They never heard of it in Canada, and

that is only one of many English-speaking continents. There are many lands in Europe where your name was never heard, or if you can only find refuge in an English-speaking country, there 's Canada, and the United States, and Australasia : they are not speaking or thinking about you there. Why go so far away ? There 's England : get a big map and look at the countless towns and villages that take no interest either in your honour or dishonour. Nay, take our own Scotland—take even Greenock—take the next street—the chances are the first twenty, fifty, a hundred people you meet never saw you before, never heard of you, will not even notice you as you go by. They have other things to talk of than your concerns.

But even if they had not, and did talk about you, they will all have forgotten you by to-morrow morning. Do you not see that every day ? That letter in the papers that was so full of pungent wit, why, you can't remember it—even if you read it—when the equally witty reply appears two days after.

But let the worst come to the worst. Your affairs will only be a nine days' wonder at the most. We talk of the transitoriness of Fame. ' Well,' says the poet—

> ' Well, as to Fame, who strides the earth
> With that long horn she loves to blow,
> I know a little of her worth,
> And I will tell you what I know.
> This London once was middle sea,
> These hills were plains within the past;
> They will be plains again, and we,
> Poor creatures, babble, we shall last.'

And what is true of good report is little less true of ill report.

These are the two things that at first seem to be in our text. Men are fools, and they can't harm us even when they try; that is what people mean when they say, Never mind him ! what harm does it do you ? Just say, like Paul—I don't care in the least what people think or

say of me; to *me* it is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment.

And yet we feel instinctively that that is not what Paul says, and it 's not what Paul felt; indeed it is the very opposite of what he felt. To him it was a great thing, the second greatest thing on earth, to be judged of men.

To say most men are fools, not worth heeding, is a serious thing for one to say who is himself a man, and a man with a history to remember. It is one of those boomerangs that fly through the air and come back, after however tortuous a course, to the feet of the man who threw them. It is one of those sayings that come home to roost.

But think of the tremendous issues involved in such a judgment—think of the tremendous indictment it brings against God. The man whose judgment I despise is not only *my* fellow-man, but he was made by God, and however far he has fallen God cares for him, God cares for his opinion, God cares for his judgment, and cares so much for that judgment that He submits the most momentous of all questions to it—submits His Own claims, submits His Son's claims, to it. What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? Who do ye say the Son of Man is? But that one question involves a thousand more every day we live, and these thousand more our intellects, our minds, our intelligences *must* answer.

Think of the awful questions raised by the subject of human responsibility. Not only must men—not picked men, or leaders of men, or men here and there, but all men, the man you meet in the street, the men and women that are sitting beside you now in these pews—I say not only must they answer the most tremendous questions that the Infinite Mind of God Himself can put, not only must they answer them in a few short years at most, years shortened still more by the subtractions of infancy and sleep and sickness and old age, and all the distractions of our various toils in life—but on these questions depends our everlasting well-being. That man, by whom we say it is a very little thing to be judged, is yet to be tried for his opinion, and

therefore he must be capable of forming an opinion on matters whose issues are only two—eternal life and eternal death. You and I may pass him by and say he is not worth heeding, but that man's cry reaches the ear of the Lord of Sabaoth, and turns God's eyes, and hastens God's steps, and makes God's heart beat quick a thousand times a day.

And there will come another hour—a long, long hour or day—how long we cannot tell—when that man, fool or no fool, will stand up before all men, and all angels, and God shall be face to face with him, and after that day is passed the ages of endless ages that we call eternity will never be the same again either for him or for God.

No knight of Arthur's ever dealt in scorn, and Paul was as true and courteous a knight to friend or foe as ever put spear in rest. You—some of you at least—have heard the famous question—Do the higher order of cherubim ever sneer? *That*, we may be sure, they never do, for they are made of one piece with the mercy-seat of God. Can we think of Paul sneering? No man that ever lived had such high regard for the sanctity of the human mind and the greatness of human powers. To one of his intelligence there was nothing small in that mind that in every man is the candle of the Lord. Nor can we for a moment think that Paul would have said, 'No man can harm me whatever his thought of me may be.' Even were that so, it should be enough to vex us that he harms himself. But it does harm us. There is a certain immortality, a certain infinite greatness, in every human act.

> 'It hurts us if a baby hides its face
> Or child strikes at us punily, calls names,
> Or makes a mouth.'

The human heart cries out for respect, for reverence, for love. We are too conscious of our destiny to do aught else.

I once asked a man how he enjoyed a visit to Ceylon he had been paying. 'Very much, of course,' he said. 'And

yet,' he added, 'the thing I remember best about it always vexes me.' And then he told me what it was. He had hired a catamaran, one of the surf-boats, from a native at, I think, Point de Galle. He wished just to be able to say he had been in one. The native imagined he had hired it for a cruise, and when after a few moments he left the boat, there was a dispute about the money that was due. The man thought, judging by every standard he could apply, that he had acted handsomely; the native said he was cheating him, and, after much disputing, fired this parting shot in English—'You no gentleman.' 'I would like,' said the man who told me this, 'to meet that native again and argue it out with him.' 'No gentleman' was an imputation under which he could not rest; it grieved him that a man—a foreigner, a poor Cinghalese boatman who was never to see him again, but still a man—should wittingly or unwittingly misjudge him. Have we not all felt the same? Who does not wince at some judgment hastily made, thoughtlessly uttered—it may be by a child—a score of years ago? You see children playing at school, getting palmies, and smiling as they get them. But let a teacher only say, '*Hold out your hand,*' and give one little palmy not half so hard, the tears are there before the blow has fallen.

To the Apostle Paul, to live was Christ; to preach Christ was more than life to him. To get men to believe in Christ—it was for that he was a chosen vessel. He stood in Christ's stead, as every preacher stands; but he stood more in Christ's stead than any man that ever lived. He was the chiefest of the apostles, the man who had seen God's glory and comprehended God's secret as no man ever had. Greater than Moses, he had been not simply alone with God upon the mount, but caught up into Paradise, and had seen such things as no tongue or pen could utter or express. He carried in his hands as no man ever did the ark of God, the oracles of God, the honour of God, and in some ways the world's destiny. To win men's personal regard for himself was almost the same as winning

them for Christ—it was the first step to it. And was that a very little thing? Was it not rather the very greatest thing?

And yet why does Paul after all call it a very little thing? Does not the explanation lie in this—it was a big thing in itself, absolutely big, absolutely infinite one may almost say, and yet, compared with being judged by God, it was a little thing—relatively, as we say, a very little thing? The sea out there behind us is a big thing compared with the ponds upon the heights behind you, and these ponds again are big compared with the gush a child builds with clay and clods upon the street, and that again looks big to the child—forty years after this even, it will boast and brag of them—I say it 's big beside a drop of water, and that drop may seem a monstrous thing to the animalcule that takes all its life to search within one corner of that drop and finds there ample space for careering in. But what is that drop, that gush, that pond, that harbour, to that great and spacious sea, on which one may journey weeks on end without sighting a single sail, that sea whose depths no plummet ever sounded, that sea that tosses on a single billow the mightiest ship that man can make, as though it were a cockle-shell? And what is this great globe itself to its fellows in our solar system? and what is that great sun itself and all its attendants with their ever-revolving satellites to those vast worlds that amaze our vision—still more to those uncounted orbs whose wanderings are within God's sight and in God's book alone?

Even so it is not man's littleness but God's immensity, His infinite immensity, that here strikes upon Paul's imagination. A kind word, a hearty tribute, a well-turned compliment, a smile of satisfaction, a gesture of delight, a loving glance, may turn night into day, and chase away despair and banish fear and kindle hope, and be as life from the dead to one; and will be surely remembered even in eternity. And on the other hand, a slander, a cruel accusation, a jibe, a sneer, a taunt, a gesture of contempt, an artful silence, may cause the blood fly to my cheeks,

may make me quit the company I sought, may force me to leave my customary road and choose a bypath for my homeward way; the thought of any one of these things may rouse my anger every time it comes into my memory; nay, when twenty, thirty, forty, sixty years have gone, and the man who uttered it has been for half a century with God, the remembrance of one word, one tone, may vex me and may make me wince. And if all that comes through the half-formed, misinformed judgment of a man, how great a thing and how fearful a thing it must be to fall into the hands of the living God. If even the very Son of God after ten million times ten million years of preparation, and of fellowship and joy surpassing human thought, trembled to bear the wrath of God for less than two rounds of the clock, though there was another eternity of countless ages of still greater joy to follow, how shall you, how shall I, face that God, unless, by taking Christ as our Saviour and Intercessor, we make sure of a joyful welcome and a complete acquittal in that day?

CHAPTER XVIII

LETTERS

1907–1911

'No wedded love under the sun can be more tender, fuller of tranquil dignity, facile sacrifice, and refined courtesy, than is sometimes that of married folk who contracted wedlock in their life's September.'—BISHOP THOROLD.

OUR marriage, wisely or unwisely long delayed, took place on May 20, 1907. My husband had long thought of Oxford as an ideal place for a honeymoon. So to Oxford we went.

To the Rev. James Brown

(Of St. Peter's U.F. Church, Glasgow.)

11 IFFLEY ROAD, OXFORD,
May 27, 1907.

MY DEAR BROWN,—We heard here of your most kind and acceptable gift. A. tells me she never read Lockhart's *Scott*, which, as a revelation, is only to be equalled by what I heard a clever woman say only the other day who affirmed that she had never read *Robinson Crusoe!* . . .

A. and I had a few words—friendly—with Canon Driver. We wished to hear him lecture, but could not find the place, though we asked many. At last, in despair, we approached a Don in cap and gown, and asked if he could direct us. He said we might find it very uninteresting. We said we would like just to see Canon Driver. He smiled and said, 'Well, I am going to lecture now!' I

told him we were like Saul, saying, 'Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is?' and Samuel answered, 'I am the seer.' (I hope you know that passage?) He had three men at his lecture. One of the verses he expounded was—'Can a maid forget her ornaments or a bride her *sash?*' Our landlord is University Bedellus, and has personal reminiscences of Froude, Jowett, Freeman, Emerson, Holmes, Lowell, Nettleship, J. R. Green, Browning, Binning, Munro, and all the great and good of the last thirty years.—Yours ever gratefully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Rev. W. Lewis Robertson

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
June 20, 1907.

MY DEAR ROBERTSON.—Mrs. Robertson's and your own beautiful gift [1] came as duly as it has been unduly acknowledged, and I shall certainly speak more kindly of coppersmiths in future than I have done in the past. He has done us no harm this time. We are not in order yet. In addition to all the work a marriage brings there is the accumulated débris of a slovenly lifetime, and my poor wife would have been driven to despair had she been other than she is. She sends her kindest remembrance.

The congregation gave us a public reception, and have in many ways been very good to us. Ever so many thanks once more from this grateful man and his grateful wife.

ANNIE L. and J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. Lindsay Galloway

(Who was returning from a cruise on the s.s. 'Midnight Sun.')

July 5, 1907.

MY DEAR GALLOWAY,—You will be on your way back from perpetual sunshine, and it is to be hoped have brought back with you more than a mere personal supply.

[1] A copper breakfast dish.

Your kind letter, and Mrs. Galloway's and your own good wishes, gave my wife and me unfeigned joy. I do hope we all may meet soon. She has often, often heard me speak of you both, which my language was both truthful and eloquent, as well as grammatical. In Oxford I meditated so often writing to you—it was there we began our honeymooning (our moon, like the Norway sun, is to be perpetual)—that I really half believe I did write to you. I thought of you specially when I read on the Balliol Gate the Latin summons to elect a *Magister Futurus* in place of *Vir Eximius Edwardus Caird.* It was you who first told me he was thought of as Master, and I jeered at you. I heard an All Souls Fellow, L. Smith, talking of your friend, Paton Ker, as 'one of the best.'

To-morrow being our 'Fair,' postal arrangements are all upset. I am ashamed to think your letter lay unanswered fifteen days before you left for Norroway. But many others have lain longer, and I have been writing on end these seven weeks. We have a lot to talk about. I hope we 'll meet soon.

This is barely legible, but better a half-legible letter than none at all.—Yours ever gratefully,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. Alex. Smellie

GREENOCK, *Oct.* 16, 1907.

MY DEAR SMELLIE,—I 'm so glad you are home again—from Sicily too!—and your handwriting as strong and neat as ever. I heard last week that you hoped I would come to Carluke, and I said to myself, 'Of course, I 'll go.'[1] Thursday, 12th December, if all 's well. . . .

I could have cried with delight and shame at the thought that you are going to inscribe your book 'To J. P. Struthers'—I prefer that form.[2] I have often wished to be remembered after I am dead, and now I 'm sure of it,

[1] To give a lecture.

[2] Dr. Smellie inscribed his book *In the Secret Place* 'To J. P. Struthers, in token of a debt I cannot pay.'

and I thank God for it with all my heart. I don't know all you mean to put—whether just my name or not—but please don't say anything—if you do add anything—too absurdly kind or generous. Oh, but I 'm proud of it. 'Thou hast spoken of thy servant for a great while to come.' It is good of your wife to let you hitch my trolley to your star and hers. I must try to be worthy of it. May God bless you for your goodness to me.

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

(*When J. P. S. had seen the Press notice that Edinburgh University was to confer the Degree of D.D. on Mr. Smellie.*)

GREENOCK, *Feb.* 5, 1908.

MY DEAR SMELLIE,—I 'm just awfully glad. I 've read every list for years, and it has come at last. But it should have come years ago. And my wife is right glad too, and especially glad for your elect lady's sake. How proud your father and mother will be, for I 'm sure they knew before you. You 'll have some good company on the Graduation Day. I haven't seen Grant yet, but I know he 'll be as glad as I am, or as near such a pitch of joy as he can attain to. It is a new gift to be taken thankfully from God ; it 's ten talents added to your previous hundred. —Yours, gratefully to God, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
April 13, 1908.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I am going to ask a favour and a very big one, and I shan't misjudge you if you say 'No,' but I hope you won't. I write in bed. I took quinsy twelve days ago. The doctor lanced it last Saturday afternoon, but last night was the first I was conscious of having slept any for almost a week, and even the pleasure of it was reduced by a horrid nightmare—I dreamed that

chiefly through my fault the *Glasgow Herald* published as *news* the death of Robert Browning. It had a whole sheet about it, and the ridicule of the country was very great. But to resume—I unhappily promised last autumn to address the Ministers' Prayer Union the night the U.F. Assembly meets. I meant to give a fortnight to it uninterruptedly if possible this month. I have other work in May, even if I had my strength back by the 22nd. You told me when I was in Carluke that you had two or three of your lectures for American ministers prepared, and I wondered if you would be willing to take my place and address the Edinburgh ministers a second time, giving them one of the Hartford series. Of course I would need to get the Committee's consent, but I know they would jump at the proposal. I have never heard anything spoken of more lovingly than the address you gave them, and I know they would all like to greet you in your new name.

Are you willing to step into the breach for the sake of the ministers and of my own reputation? I know they would receive the news with unfeigned delight.

I shall not misjudge you if you say 'No.' I shall not even ask you to give your reasons. But I hope, I hope you will say 'Yes,' and if you say 'No' I know I have no right to blame you for refusing to help me out of a difficulty I should never have undertaken. I must not forget that you yourself have passed through a much deadlier time than I and cannot have too much strength to spare. Our kindest regards to your wife and bairns.—Yours affectionately, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

40 ELDON STREET, GREENOCK,
April 21, 1908.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—Your telegram and letter were a tremendous relief to me, and I can never forget your kindness. I hope you are not returning on purpose from your week-end in London?

I am still very weak, and shall be for some time. I was preaching on Sabbath, but could hardly crawl home. I daren't ride in a car—having protested publicly—and the angels didn't lend me wings—so far as I know.

Once more a thousand thanks. It was good of you both. Love to all the household.—Your shaky friend,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the same

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
June 15, 1908.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I have blessed you a hundred times in my heart for relieving me of that duty last month, and by all I have heard I was not alone in doing so. I heard great accounts of your address. . . .

To the Rev. James Brown

(On the occasion of the reopening of St. Peter's U.F. Church after repainting and the introduction of electric light.)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
August 27, 1908.

MY DEAR BROWN,—Sept. 3, 8 P.M.—Cromwell's great day! Only I do wish—but alas, alas!

I 'll remember it. And you are not to send a railway ticket. The last is still unused. It is good of you to ask me to dinner, but kindly excuse me. I would rather go to the church from the train. The few minutes I have to spare I shall find useful in gathering my so-called wits together.

You won't object to my giving out nothing but Psalms. I 'll choose good ones. But you will give out the first one and pray. It would please everybody that your voice should first be heard in the church. You will wish the 24th—or— ? Tell me if there are any you would specially like.

I hope it will be a night to be remembered.—Yours faithfully,

J. P. STRUTHERS,

To Mr. W. H. Slowan, President of the National Bible Society of Scotland

(J. P. S. having paid an annual subscription twice in one year.)

40 Eldon St., Greenock,
Dec. 14, 1908.

My dear Mr. Slowan,—I find from a receipt of 29th May last—No. 88—that the £10 for the colporteur in China, which I sent you two weeks ago, had been already paid!—'which is significant of much on my part.' My wife and I are quite pleased at the mistake, only we would like the first £10 to go to a life membership for me. But if your books don't allow that, just put it down anonymously for a second colporteurship. In any case, make no reference to it at the annual meeting to-morrow, if, as we all hope, you are able to be present. The U.F. Gaelic folks, in whose new church—formerly St. Thomas's—we meet, perhaps feel sore at having been beat by our congregation in the Greenock annual subscriptions for several years. Indeed, I have often thought it would have been good for the Society if we had let them in always by a head in this Marathon race—but perhaps you are not up in sporting matters! In any case, seeing we meet in their church, give them as much glory as possible and make *no allusion* whatever to me or my people. This is not said in mock humility, but honestly.

And you are not to acknowledge receipt of this.

We are all sorry to hear you have not been well this year. You must be ill no more, for, as the old Romans used to say, 'If you are well, we are well.' Forgive me for using up three minutes of your time and thirty—I don't know the proper measure—of your eyesight.—Yours ever gratefully,

J. P. Struthers.

To Rev. A. D. Grant, Greenock

Oxford, *May* 26, 1909.

My dear Grant,—. . . We have two tiny rooms, but everything is very dainty. Our landlady was with Dr. Bellamy, President of St. John's, twenty years as house-

keeper. Her husband serves in the College. Dr. Bellamy is about ninety-four. There is a huge portrait of him which dominates our sitting-room. . . . On Monday evening I visited Wellington Square,[1] two hundred yards off, and heard some Hindoos chattering through the open windows in their own speech wherein they were born. Such an evening for beauty as we had ten years ago. Bare-headed ladies in evening dress walking about at the Randolph. On Tuesday we went to morning prayer at Christ Church Cathedral. Coming away at eleven we saw scores of parsons, mostly gowned and capped. Found that Paget (the Bishop) was beginning his visitation. Waited to it. They went through the Litany, then kneeling sang the 'Veni Spiritus.' Roll called, every man stood and cried—'Here.' The Bishop sat and bowed in the direction of each man as he answered. Scores could not see him, of course. A parson stood behind him with pastoral staff. His speech (first of twelve to be given at different centres) was read, two words at a time in a high-pitched voice, barely audible, owing to the echo—on remembering that we should care more to do the duties than to claim the rights of our places. 'So shall it not be with you.' Not in the least striking in any way, though the singing of the 'Veni' by so many men was curious. There were five or six ladies present. Called at our old rooms. The Bedell got us permission to go to the University barge. He had also asked for tickets for evensong at Magdalen for us—not at our asking—and the Vice-Chancellor was only 'too pleased to give them to friends of the late Master of Balliol.' Streets very wet with seven or eight hours' heavy rain. The country needed it badly, however. My seat at the Cathedral was under Burton's effigy :

Paucis notus, paucioribus ignotus,
Hic jacet
Democritus Junior,
cui vitam dedit et mortem
Melancholia.

[1] Where the Grants, Denneys, and J. P. S. had rooms when they visited Oxford in 1899.

Home to lunch.

At 2.15 heard the last Slade Lecture for the term; by C. J. Holmes, M.A. Young man. Two ladies, five men (one late). Then off to see if they had begun cricket. Sun now out. Paid 1s. each. Going to begin in five minutes. Another heavy shower. No great attendance.

3.30.—A few of the crowd cried, 'Time up.'

3.45.—Play not likely.

3.50.—Umpires inspect wicket.

3.55.—Rope round pitch removed amid cheers.

4.—Great roaring of the crowd from the river (three sets of races this year, there are so many boats).

4.10.—Trumper et Cie. appeared. Cheers. You know the style?

We left at 5.20 to see the bumps. Were put on University's barge and were next to Christ Church barge. Christ Church for the third year is head of the river. Stroked by W. Gladstone. We had a good view of them all. Home to dinner. Afterwards went out to see the streets. . . . Passed a German band full size, twenty yards off a lot of undergraduates in rooms, hanging over the windows, one of them every ten seconds blew a loud discordant note from a brass horn. It was a shabby trick, but was very laughable.

May 27.

Fear there will be no cricket to-day. Yesterday the most interesting thing about it was watching the tossing of the ball between four of the Kangaroos before the game began. They stood twenty feet from each other and tried to deceive one another, looking one way and throwing another, like Bunyan's ferryman.

Our kindest regards to you all. You will have a small meeting to-night, but I hope a happy one. We 'll be thinking of you. We shall go to a Congregational prayer-meeting—the same one we went to the week of our marriage, 1907. The subject there was—'They supposing Him to have been in the company.'—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. Lewis Robertson

(Whose church, in Cardiff, had been destroyed by fire.)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Feb. 25, 1910.

MY DEAR ROBERTSON,—You will be having a multitude of thoughts to-day.

I have often pictured such a thing as happening to myself, but your calamity has made the imagination a more vivid one.

I think of you as being like Nehemiah traversing the ruins in the moonlight all alone. And I think of you as being like one of the disciples when they saw Christ gazing at the buildings of the temple and wondering what it was that was passing through His mind. Grant told me a little of what he said to you. I, too, am sure this will make your people and all Cardiff see new qualities and powers in you. I hope—we both hope—this has not hurt Mrs. Robertson's health.--Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Dr. Denney

Sept. 1, 1910.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—Once you one-tenth agreed to give us some time or other your lecture on Dr. Johnson's writings. I blush to ask if you have a free night and a willing heart any time after the first or second week of October. I myself am saying 'No' with a frequency and a vigour that are positively altering the shape of my mouth. I wonder how often you say it? It is such great boldness my asking you that it will be a relief if you say you positively can't come! If you are so struck with my effrontery as to say that though you neither regard young men's associations nor fear wealthy corporations, yet because this poor brother beats all, you will come, then—sentence unfinishable. *Please* do not hesitate to say 'No.' I have refused four invitations this week already. But perhaps you are not so popular as I am! We have

not been away this year, but have had troops of friends and that which should accompany them—great pleasure. I send a postcard to save you time. If you say 'No' I'll respect you more than if you say 'Yes.' But it may be you would rather be something else than respected!—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. Dr. Lynd, Belfast

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Oct. 7, 1910.

MY DEAR DR. LYND,—I wish I remembered all my mercies as vividly as I remember the misery of that April Sabbath twenty years ago. As soon as I can, after your anniversary services are past, I'll come and read to your people 'A Story of a Week-end in Scotland one hundred Years ago' for your Sabbath school funds. And I'll preach most gladly three times the Sabbath before, but I don't like anniversary services where the collection is the main thing. Nothing would ever induce me to preach again when the collection was to be taken up by Alderman So and So—or whatever your official titles are.[1] With these reservations, and with the proviso that you come here, I'll gladly come over early next summer, if all goes well, but that phrase includes many very possible possibilities.

We enjoyed the visit of the Kennedys and Miss Metheny [2] immensely. The story of their faith and love makes one feel small indeed.

Forgive me if I have written too strongly.—Yours affec.,
J. P. STRUTHERS.

[1] On this Dr. Lynd remarks: 'Mr. Struthers preached at the opening of our church about twenty-five years ago. According to our Irish custom we invited a number of our friends—some of them of local prominence—to take up the collection. No doubt in the circumstances the collection bulked large in the minds of our people. He did not like that—who could?'

[2] Rev. S. H. Kennedy and his wife and Miss Metheny are missionaries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

To the same

Oct. 26, 1910.

DEAR DR. LYND,—I would like you to come here when I go to Belfast, and even if it were summer I could give a lecture. I would like my people to hear you. They are all pretty sick of me now. I assure you I would give a good deal to be at a Communion in your church. I don't think I have been at one other than my own for over twenty years. It is a great privation.

Remember us both kindly to Mrs. Lynd. I hope your family are adding fresh honours to their already long list.

To Mr. M'Call

Jan. 20, 1911.

MY DEAR MR. M'CALL,—I wonder how many men in broad Scotland would have done what you have done in the matter of the *Illustrated News*.[1] If you know of any, kindly let me have their addresses. You have been far too good to us, but it seems to me if you go on as you are doing you will need an old-age pension and a charity football benefit when the time comes. . . .

To the same

Dec. 1913.

I DON'T know how to thank you. Your innumerable benefactions will inevitably land you in the Bankruptcy Court unless the Promises hold true! How will it read in the papers: 'Bankrupt attributed the state of affairs to reckless generosity, specially to ungrateful ministers'? . . .

To Dr. Smellie

GREENOCK, *Jan.* 23, 1911.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I was from home for five days and returned last week, with the *Morning Watch* further behind than it has been these twenty-two years. I only got the

[1] Mr. M'Call's gifts of illustrated papers were always enjoyed and then handed on to others.

printer satisfied at midday on Saturday. It is good of you to ask me to your protest meeting, but I question if it is wise. I have had a lot of experience in approaching magistrates, etc., on that point, and I find they all resent outside interference. They would say, 'Who in all the world is this Smithers, or whatever his name is? What does he know of this district and its traffic? Was he ever near the place on a Sabbath? Has he any special interest in Motherwell? Let him attend to his own Greenock, which we hear is not all that a town should be.' Muir, as head of the U.F. Temperance Committee, has a *locus standi*, but I have none. Don't be angry, but I feel I am right in this.

Remember us both to Mrs. Smellie, and a blessing be on all your household. I hear you talked of everywhere, to my great joy. Have you read Marcus Dods' *Letters*? I find them interesting in many ways, but, as letters, disappointing. But I am a poor critic.—Ever yours,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. W. C. Mitchell

(On his being called to East U.F. Church, Larbert.)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
June 29, 1911.

MY DEAR MITCHELL,—That 's a solemn as well as a merry and most interesting letter. I hope you will all be very happy at Larbert, and that Larbert will be happy in you. If all 's well I 'll come to Larbert for the induction. I meant to come whether you asked me or no. But 'or no' never occurred to me. Only I shan't go in for a flattering speech. It is a cruel and sinful and valueless thing to speak as men do about their friends at such meetings. . . . I 'll be looking out for the continuation of the 'Pressgang,' only it does make me a bit envious.[1]

[1] There was a good-natured rivalry between W. C. M. and J. P. S. regarding their occasional contributions to different newspapers. *The Pressgang* refers to one of W. C. M.'s successful articles.

I wonder if Paul's parchments were rejected MSS. I think he says he knew what envy was.

Our kindest regards to Mrs. Mitchell and Miss Fleming.—Yours, J. P. STRUTHERS.

Imagine the rest of this elegant sheet filled with kind and wise observations.

To the Rev. John Rutherford

(*Who had sent some proofs of a book he was bringing out on 'The Later Years of St. Paul.'*)

Nov. 8, 1911.

MY DEAR RUTHERFORD,—My time on Monday was not my own, and yesterday from 9.30 A.M. to 11.5 P.M. I was in Glasgow—Presbytery, etc. I have read with pleasure the pages you sent me and seemed to find your style much nearer in interest to your conversation than I thought it the last time. I have noted a point or two for your review. I know it is hardly fair to dishearten you in the least now that you have made up your mind to publish, but one can't forget that the market for theological books is limited, and you will be apt to fall between two stools. There are the companies of primers on the one hand for beginners, and the dry monographs written for the learned. Is there a middle class? But I feel this is hardly fair of me. I envy you your knowledge and your courage and your faith. My wife is loud in her admiration of your willingness to send your children to the mission field. You and your wife have both a right to speak about Paul, and that's something to say. Our kindest regards and best wishes to all. Denney and I went to hear Andrew Lang last night—excessively poor and flippant—the poorness greater than the flippancy.—Yours affectionately, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To an old School Friend

GREENOCK, *Dec.* 5. 1911.

MY DEAR CURRIE,—Your letter has given me very great pleasure. You remember some things that I had clean

forgotten. But I remember some, no doubt, that have passed from your memory. I think you had the faculty of humour earlier than most boys and stronger than most men. I still tell some of your stories and jests. You must tell me more about yourself. I have had a very undistinguished life, though there has been much happiness in it. I have worked—I hope I can say 'worked' in some measure truly—quietly away, but have wrought no deliverance in the earth. I send you two volumes of a little magazine I have written now for twenty-four years. It has a circulation of 10,000 monthly. It pays expenses—which is all I ever wished. You may find one or two jokes in it! The lady who illustrates it became my wife four years ago.

I get a yearly letter from J. M. asking me to the Class Supper—I only went once to it, or twice. I see J. W. every two or three years. I hear somebody say 'John!' and there he is—as young-looking as ever and full of capers, but now a U.F. elder. Most of the class I have never seen or heard of since I left school. S. G. is a bachelor physician of renown and great wealth. A good many of our class-mates went the wrong road. Tell me something about yourself, and all good be with you and yours.—Yours, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. C. Jerdan

(On receiving a letter from him telling that he was applying for a colleague.)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Dec. 8, 1911.

MY DEAR MR. JERDAN,—It was good of Mrs. Jerdan and you to take me into your confidence at such a solemn time.

I feel as if I could cry a little. I am like the pilgrims who heard that a post had come for Mr. Honest! Only it 's not quite so bad as that! I feel, too, like Elisha when he went with Elijah, and the other folks were standing

afar off—'Knowest thou not?' 'Yea, I know, and I knew before any of you! Hold ye your peace.' And I must hold my own, for I hardly know what to think. I must come up and see you for a moment or two soon. You are not to acknowledge my little volume by letter. If you do, it will be taken as meaning 'I don't want to see you.' And you are not allowed to contract yourself out of this construction by any addition to any letter! I feel as if this were a day to be remembered and thought about—one of Jerusalem's days. My most kind regards to Mrs. Jerdan.—Yours, 'from Mizar hill,'

J. P. STRUTHERS.

CHAPTER XIX

CONCERNING PERSONAL INFLUENCE

'That best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.'—WORDSWORTH.

'We are fond of talking of those who have given us pleasure, not that we have anything important to say, but because the subject is pleasing.'—OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

'TAKE a little honey with you.' My husband followed this patriarchal injunction whole-heartedly. He believed in the power of 'little kindnesses' to bring much sweetness into the lives of others. Sometimes his benefactions were so very little, and presented with such gravity, that they provoked a smile.

On his weekly visit to Gateside Hospital he rarely went unprovided with sweets for the children who were convalescent, and a handful of cinnamon balls for the women at their washing tubs in the hospital laundry. Now and again he had the pleasure of giving a copy of one of the Gospels to a foreign sailor in the wards, who had become ill while his ship was in port. Italian, French, Portuguese—they were always pleased to get something to read in their own tongue, and he eagerly availed himself of these opportunities of sowing beside all waters.

It was in connection with the phthisis wards that a new line of correspondence began. He had promised one day to post a letter for a patient on his way home; but he carried it for two days in his pocket! On his

1. *Haven't I a wonderful memory for an old Crow?*

2. *A faithful messenger—that's me—this time!—J. P. S.*

3. *The Old Crow soliloquises: 'What a lot of good patient people and kind nurses there are in there!'*

4. *Old Mr. Crow had a pleasant shower bath yesterday afternoon.*

next visit, after confession made, the same patient, with unabated confidence, entrusted him with another letter ; and to relieve her mind of anxiety lest the forgetfulness should have repeated itself, he sent her a postcard which we designed for the occasion. It gave so much pleasure to patients and nurses that others were sent—always referring to some incident of the day—week after week. They were familiarly known as the 'Old Crow Series.' 'Anything,' he said, 'to give these poor sick folks a wee bit laugh.' As reproduced on the opposite page they look sadly colourless, without a brilliant scarlet letter-box and blue sky.

The hospital lay two miles from his own door, but on his way home he often went a long roundabout to take a message of reassurance to some anxious mother whose child, at her request, he had seen in the scarlet fever or diphtheria ward. Perhaps he carried back the glad news that the little one would be home on such a day, and that she wished an apple-dumpling for her dinner.

It could not be said that he was a 'good correspondent.' But a weekly letter or newspaper which he knew was looked for was sent without fail. To write a letter to await the arrival of some one landing in a strange country or town, or one that a friend starting on a voyage should find on entering his cabin, was a favourite idea. Such surprise letters he often wrote, and urged others to do likewise.

Each day had its own line of 'kindnesses.' There was hardly a time in his ministry when he did not have a deaf member, for whom on Sabbath he was always careful to write out a short summary of his sermons, along with the Psalms to be sung. It was his custom to write it in his own little room before preaching, and then to place it in the pew before the congregation

had begun to assemble. He said it was good for himself, and helped him to remember his points. Many of these notes have been preserved, and some, although brief, are included in this volume. In a letter to the present writer, Dr. Denney recommended the publication of these sermon notes of his late friend, saying :— 'An indication of what one was going to say is often the most interesting form of record, though one has to put a mark of interrogation after it. Pascal *pensant* is more interesting than *Les Pensées de Pascal*, and we get a more vivid impression often from notes than from a finished work.' Moreover, they will, perhaps, help to recall to those who listened to them the full discourses, which cannot now be reproduced.

Doubtless my husband's little economies, also, often provoked a smile, but they were only practised upon himself ; and while some judged it betokened meanness that he grudged spending a sixpence for anything he thought unnecessary, they did not know that at the same time he was joyfully giving ten or even a hundred pounds out of his small store where he thought it was for the good of some fellow-creature or for the hastening of Christ's Kingdom.

The reader will have gathered from my husband's letters that he hated with intense hatred the things that wrong men and women and little children. He regarded as chief among those things the trade in strong drink and the corruption of the Christian religion by the Church of Rome. For the drunkard he had nothing but pity, and he spent time and strength ungrudgingly in helping, by many devices, tempted ones to overcome the temptation. I have known him carry a drunken woman, whom he found lying in a lonely place on a winter's night on the upper reaches

of Greenock, to the shelter of the House of Refuge; and I have seen him bring in from the street a lad, quite unknown to him, who was helplessly drunk, care for him like a mother until he was sobered, and then conduct him on his way home. To the Roman Catholics who came to his door — and they were numerous—he never refused help unless in very exceptional circumstances; and the little Roman Catholic children who came to the garden gate for flowers or gooseberries always seemed to get more than others. It was those who by act or teaching placed a stumblingblock, or an occasion to fall, in their brother's way that called forth his fierce anger. As Dr. Denney wrote at the time of my husband's death :—'No one entered with purer and more unselfish passion into the indignation of Jesus when He said, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."'

I think it might be said my husband was a true 'son of consolation.' Many sent for him in their distress who were not even known to him. It was not that he said much: often he sat silent, and only listened to the tale of sorrow that was told. What he did say was always very brief, as were also his prayers; but there was an indescribable something in his words, and perhaps in the tone in which they were uttered, that reached the heart, drew it very close to the Heart of the Eternal Father, and left it there.

His letters of sympathy, too, were brief. Some of these letters are too sacred to be revealed, but permission has been granted to print the following. Although out of order as to date, they have been grouped together.

To the Rev. Alex. Smellie

(On the death of his little daughter.)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Feb. 10, 1903.

MY DEAR SMELLIE,—It is good of you and your wife to ask me to be partaker of your sorrow. Your trial is one that I cannot measure, but I know that they who have passed through it say there is nothing like it. I know also that it will bring you both nearer not only to one another, but to Christ, with whom your little maid is now and for ever. And she, too, is nearer her father and mother than she was while she was here, loving you both and praying for you and rejoicing in your faith and patience and submission and love for her more than ever. I hope—I know that your loss, if one may use such a word where there is such surpassing gain already, will be the enriching not only of your own life, and of the world's, but of Christ's also. I have not seen Grant yet, but I am sure, childless man though he be, his heart has already gone out very lovingly to you all.—Yours, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To a Member of his Congregation [1]

MY DEAR ANGUS,—I am sorry, sorry you have been so ill, and I wish there was anything I could do for you. I pray God continually to make you soon better, if it be His will. I know you will make Him your refuge and your strength, and you are just to lie in His arms like a helpless little child—

'Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me.'

God bless you, dear Angus.—Yours affectionately,
J. P. STRUTHERS.

[1] This letter was addressed to one beloved by all, who was taken away in the prime of life. It is written in large characters, evidently that it might be read by him even through the mists of pain and weakness. After death it was found underneath his pillow.

To Mr. and Mrs. James M'Crea, Glasgow [1]

40 ELDON STREET, GREENOCK,
Dec. 19, 1911.

MY DEAR MR. AND MRS. M'CREA,—One does not know what to say either to you or to God at such a time as this. I know that neither of you will say one word against Him though you may find it hard, and even impossible, for a time at least, to say, 'Thy will be done.' And God won't be angry at you for grieving, for He knoweth our frame. It is good to remember that every blow that falls on us falls even more heavily on Him. And I am sure that if you could see and hear Willie, your sorrow would be turned to joy, and joy unspeakable. You will often be thinking of what he might have been: think rather of what he is.

My wife joins me in loving sympathy. She lost her only brother and her two sisters all within a little over one year, so she knows in measure what you are passing through.

Remember us to the girls. I had a call from your young minister yesterday forenoon. He was speaking so kindly of you all. We little knew how deep were the waters you were to pass through before nightfall.—I am, yours affectionately,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mrs. M'Crea

40 ELDON STREET, GREENOCK,
Jan. 13, 1912.

MY DEAR MRS. M'CREA,—You have never been out of our mind all these sad and anxious weeks. We hope you have felt the consolations of God to be very great.

I have been thinking—but perhaps you have done it already—that it would be a bonnie and a Christlike thing to do if you were to send a message through the 'Governor'

[1] Mr. and Mrs. M'Crea, originally members of the Greenock Reformed Presbyterian congregation, had removed to Glasgow. Their son, Willie, engineer on the s.s. *Clan Lamont*, when in the Red Sea, was killed by a Lascar fireman, who in a fit of passion, when his back was turned, felled him with one blow of his shovel.

or the 'Protestant Chaplain' of the jail to the Lascar stoker, to tell him that you and your husband forgave him, and were praying to God to forgive him, too; and that if your son's death were to bring about his murderer's salvation, you would be comforted beyond measure.

It 's easy for me to ask you to do a hard thing, but I know you would like to do God's will and to be like Christ, and we know what our Lord Himself said on the cross. What a glorious thing it would be if your laddie were to welcome the Lascar into Paradise.[1] My love—our love—to you all.—Yours affectionately, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. John M'Kee

40 ELDON STREET, GREENOCK,
May 15, 1912.

MY DEAR MR. M'KEE,—We missed you greatly,[2] but we were all so glad to hear you were improving so rapidly that our mourning was turned into joy. And we kept you constantly and fervently in our prayers. We had a very happy meeting. Our only point of disagreement was over the Mission Board's recommendation about mixed marriages. Some of us thought the thing should be left entirely in the discretion of the missionaries who are on the spot. We put off that question till our next meeting of Synod. The Seceders spoke very kindly, and with great wisdom. All they asked was a friendly deputation in return. Mr. Gregg and I go to them this evening, if all 's well.

Happy man to have had such a wife, and such a nurse![3] God bless and keep you and reward you even here for all you have been to us.—Yours affectionately,

THE RIGHT REV. THE MODERATOR.

[1] Mr. and Mrs. M'Crea wrote a touching letter to the Governor of the Presidency Jail, Calcutta, sending a message of full and free forgiveness to the prisoner, and saying that if their forgiveness led him to seek the forgiveness of God for his misdeed, they would be greatly comforted. This message was duly delivered, and seemed to make a deep impression on the man.

[2] At meetings of Synod. Mr. M'Kee had been seriously ill.

[3] Mr. M'Kee's daughter.

To Mrs. Murdoch

(On the death of her husband.)

40 ELDON STREET, GREENOCK,
Nov. 22, 1912.

MY DEAR MRS. MURDOCH,—My wife and I have been thinking and speaking a great deal about you this week. You will be feeling very desolate to-morrow, and the loneliness will become, for a time at least, greater and greater. And yet I know you will not be alone. I knew Mr. Murdoch for over forty-seven years, so that he was actually the oldest friend I had in the world.

Mr. Murdoch was more than a friend; I may say he controlled in several ways the whole of my life from that first day I saw him in the High School. I am thinking of saying a few words about him in the *Morning Watch*. He told me last January that he had not missed writing a day in his Diary for over fifty years. Perhaps one of your boys will tell me if he had kept it on to the end. His brother, Dr. John, kept his diary to the last day of his life. The last legible word in it was 'India.' I hope your husband's last words were as significant. And yet, even if they were commonplace, as we would say, even then they would give one a sense of the never-ending continuity of his life.—I am his and yours, ever gratefully, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Rev. Dr. Lynd, of Belfast

(On the death of his wife.)

40 ELDON STREET, *May* 8, 1914.

MY DEAR DR. LYND,—My wife and I were much vexed this week when we heard of Mrs. Lynd's death. Last January my greatest companion—a man whose superior in many ways I have never seen or heard of—fell down dead a few minutes after I had parted from him on the street, and his death and the gap it made in my life have often since made me feel how terrible a thing the death of

a wife must be. Yet his death, with all its accompaniments, and especially the increasingly kind and merry look on his face after death, have made me feel how unbroken is the chain that links earth and heaven, and binds those that are dear there and here. I sometimes quote a two-hundred-year-old epitaph on the grave of a husband and wife in Durham Cathedral :—

'We once were two,
We two made one,
Now no more two
Though life be gone.'

Our friends in Heaven must have us in their minds every hour of the day, loving us and praying for us and rejoicing over us, over what we were, and are, and are to be. You know, as no other knows, what a sweet face Mrs. Lynd had, and how loving. These days in Heaven have not made her sweetness or her love to you any the less. It is a great joy to my wife that she met her.

Remember me very kindly to all your children.—Yours, sorrowing and yet rejoicing, J. P. STRUTHERS.

My husband often grieved over the 'unprofitableness' of his ministry ; but is it not the case that it is seldom given to the labourer to see the fruits of his labour ? Yet the promise must be sure, 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him' : if not in this life, then surely in the life to come.

The following extracts, taken from letters written at the time of his death by some who had grown up from childhood under his care, show that his labour had not been in vain. Four of them have come from the foreign mission field. It is impossible not to think that now he knows the joy of harvest.

Extracts from Letters Received

Jan. 20, 1915.

"How busy memory is at present. I can never forget those hallowed times in the old church, twenty-three years ago and more, when night after night I sat drinking in every word Mr. Struthers said, and when my eyes were opened to the loveliness of Christ, and to that hidden life of power with God. He was my spiritual father, and the passing years and many kindnesses shown to me personally only deepened my regard and love. . . . How our hearts yearn for him! I can see him yet—the quiver of hand and face as he entered into the presence of God. What nights we had in the old church in West Stewart Street—nights on which the streets of Greenock seemed strange as we stepped out into the rain, and our minds and souls returned to the body from those eschatological regions through which he loved to lead us with ever increasing assurance. 'And he wist not that the skin of his face shone.'"

Feb. 18, 1915.

"Mr. Struthers has always been our guide, teacher and friend. I cannot put on paper all that he has done for me personally. He was the one above all others who made me think of higher things. Had it not been for him, I am sure that I should never have been a missionary. His teaching of the Bible was a constant revelation to us. He made life and Heaven so real and so important, and his example a constant inspiration. I cannot put in words all I should like to tell you of what I owe to him."

March 31, 1915.

"To me, as to many, his words in his sermons and in the *Morning Watch*, and his life, have been an inspiration, making what we call the commonplace things of everyday life full of a new and deeper meaning. I think I can truly say that there is not a single Sabbath day since I came to Canada that I have not looked back longingly to the Sabbaths when I sat in the wee kirk in Greenock, and listened to the messages from Mr. Struthers' lips which

brought strength and uplift for the coming week. I have sat in many churches and listened to many preachers, but to none do I owe more than to him. Nor is the least that I owe him the lessons learned while a member of his Bible Class, which used to meet in the little class-room behind the old church. Some of the things learned then have become part of myself. I have been wondering during these past two weeks why I never thanked him for all the help he has at various times and in various ways given me."

"I cannot tell you all that it has meant, and means, to me that I was one of Mr. Struthers' boys and young men. His words always kept before us a high ideal; his life helped us to follow it. I cannot forget him; nor can I sufficiently bless God for my memory of him. He is more to me than can be told."

"What I owe to Mr. Struthers can never be tabulated, but I am grateful I think most of all for his having advised me to come to India that I might give my life for its uplift. He knew me as a child, as a boy and as a man, and I always felt that he was interested in me in the highest sense. Now there is a terrible blank, the like of which I have never experienced before."

"Even some of us afar off feel the world different since we knew that Mr. Struthers had been taken. Yet in our loss we rejoice that God gave him to us for so long. We ourselves cannot realise all he has been to us through the years, and certainly we could not make any one else understand. Without him our lives would have been entirely different; indeed, it does not seem as if we could have been the same people at all. And who were we to be so highly favoured? Now that he has entered into his rest, we thank God for all he has been to us, and for the memory of him which will remain while life lasts.

"I wish I were more worthy of all he did for me. How often, when on deputation work, and elsewhere, have I received a special welcome because I belonged to Mr. Struthers' people!"

CHAPTER XX

SERMON SUMMARIES AND OCCASIONAL VERSES

'O that I knew how all thy lights combine,
And the configurations of their glory!
Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,
But all the constellations of the story.'
GEORGE HERBERT, *Of the Holy Scriptures.*

SUMMARIES OF SERMONS

Written out by J. P. S. for a deaf lady member of his congregation (*v.* pp. 353-4)

THE BARRIER OF SAND

'Fear ye not Me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at My presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?'—JER. v. 22.

GOD shows His power in keeping back the sea, and His wisdom in the way He does it. It is not the mountains or mighty gates of brass that keep it in its place. It is the insignificant sand—the sand a child plays with and tosses in the air. The wind drives it to and fro—shifting sand. Strange, too, that the sea itself makes the sand by breaking up the rocks and hurling it ever forward till it lies high and dry on the shore. And the sand is so small, an ordinary tea-cup will easily hold a million grains of sand. In a cart-load there are as many grains of sand as there are people in the whole world. Sand is so small; yet when the grains lie together they keep back the ocean, just because every grain remains true to its own character. You may break it, powder it, but it is still sand. One hundred yards from the shore you see a fruitful field—

new crops every year. Down a little bit from it lies the barren sand which produces nothing, but all the same it stems the ocean and keeps it back. But for it, where would the fruitful field be? So, many a humble saint seems to do no work for God, yet all the time is a barrier in the way of sin and in the way of Satan.

(*Psalms to be sung*—LXXXIX. 7-11; CXIV.; CXXXVI. (2nd version) 1-6; XXXIII. 6-9; XCIII.)

MARTHA SERVING

'And Martha served.'—JOHN xii. 2.

There 's no occupation nobler than that of a servant. God Himself is everybody's Servant. And Christ, who came to let us see what like God is, says: 'I am among you as he that serveth.' It does seem strange that so much of a woman's life should be taken up making meals, preparing food, etc. But it is God's appointment, and besides, it is an honourable appointment, for He asks us to walk with Him. God spends years preparing food, and then He allows us to come in and finish it and to say it was *we* who *made* the dinner. Our dinners and all our food are part of the bands of love with which God tries to bind us to Himself. But He does more than simply give us food—He offers us the true bread, even eternal life.

Martha, on a previous occasion (Luke x. 38), had made a mistake. Christ wished to speak about God and heaven, and Mary wanted to listen. Christ was God manifest in flesh, and He was not always to be with them. His work was more than His necessary food. But Martha, without thinking it, made the food the chief thing. Now, many a woman would not have seen that she was wrong, or, seeing it, would not have owned it; or, even though she saw it and couldn't help owning it, she would, for pure shame, never have served again. She might have said, 'I acted so unlike a gentlewoman to Christ and was so unkind to my sister, and that in company, that I haven't the heart to stand before Christ again.' Her willingness to serve now showed that she had learnt a lesson, and it

was as great a glory to Christ as Mary's anointing of His feet. It proved that grace could do great things and change nature, and that thought helped Christ to die. He saw of the travail of His soul and was well satisfied.

It shows, too, the love between Martha and Mary. Once Martha would have made a fine talk about that ointment: why wasn't she consulted? But Mary had noticed how much wiser and better Martha had grown, and knew that Martha would approve of her action without being asked.

(*Psalms to be sung*—CXIX. 71-75; CXXXIII.; CXLV. (2nd version) 13-18; LXXVIII. 14-19; CXXXIV.)

CHRIST IN THE THRONG

'And Jesus said, Who is it that touched Me? And when all denied, Peter said, and they that were with Him, Master, the multitudes press Thee and crush Thee.'—LUKE viii. 45 (R.V.).

Three different words in the Greek are used to describe the way in which our Lord was crushed and jostled in the crowd. It was great condescension to come to this little world. Napoleon was angry at being sent to the little island of St. Helena, ten miles long, eight broad; he had been an emperor, accustomed to ride ten, fifteen, twenty leagues a day! When Christ did come we should have expected Him to come like a king, surrounded by crowds, but by crowds kept at a becoming distance. But He was crushed and jammed like any other body. Strange humiliation for the King of Glory, but it was the means of displaying His glory.

Maybe that woman wouldn't have come but for the feeling that nobody would know; the crowd was an advantage to her. A crowd tries one's temper, especially in a matter of life and death. A crowd also gives opportunities of making friends. I think Peter would regret all his life what he said. It implied that Christ put a stupid question. But He said nothing. The woman, so to speak, *helped herself* to a blessing.

That brought out the perfection of our Lord's body.

His body did without His will, before His will bade it, just what His will would have made it do, exactly as a good horseman keeps his balance when his horse shies or jumps unexpectedly. It showed the woman's trust. She could come into His house and take what she wanted. But He wanted to give her more. The delay caused by the crowd allowed the little maid to die, and Christ had the greater glory of raising, for the first time, a person from the dead.

What crowds of things now press on Christ, but He can still feel the touch of a poor woman's love.

(*Psalms to be sung*—CXXXIX. 4-12; XXIV. 7-10; XLV. (2nd version) 1-4; XXXIV. 1-9; CXLV. (2nd version) 1-8.)

WHERE IS BETHEL?

'Arise, go up to Bethel.'—GEN. XXXV. 1.

'O God of Bethel'—one of God's greatest and sweetest names.

Where is Bethel? It is the last place in the world we ever expected to be in. A woman and her family, put out of the house by a drunken husband, sleeping in a cellar all night—that 's Bethel. I knew a gentleman's son, fourteen years old, who ran from home and landed in Greenock and offered to carry parcels for a penny—that 's Bethel. A lonely body in lodgings—man or woman; anybody in a difficulty, specially a difficulty caused by sin—that 's Bethel.

And that 's just where God is present—and not only present—but present in all His glory and majesty—God of Abraham, God of angels, God of Christ who is the ladder between earth and heaven—and our God.

Bethel is the place where we doubt and hesitate. Jacob should never have used that word 'if' (Gen. xxviii. 20).

Bethel is the place that we forget. One would have thought Jacob never could have forgotten that place. He passed through it with a staff; and twenty-one years after, with all his flocks and herds and sons.

Bethel is the place God reminds us of. It would have served us right if God had said, Then I can forget Bethel too. But it is His house, and it 's the very gate of heaven. He wants us to come back to it.

(*Psalms to be sung*—LVI. 8-13; XXVIII. 1-6; LXVI. 12-20; CXLVI. 5-10; CXVI. 13-19.)

PRAISED BY CHRIST

Read MATT. viii. 5-13 and xxv. 14-24.

Notice how heartily and splendidly our Lord *praised* people. God always gives people a foretaste of the glory they are to get.

It is to be our Lord's part at the Judgment Day to present His saints to God—to praise and reward them. It is God's part to praise Christ. He openly praised Him in the days of His humiliation. 'This is My beloved Son.' Christ enjoyed being praised and loved, so He made His disciples joint-heirs with Himself in the joy of being commended.

Part of the work of heaven will be praising people, singing not only the Song of Moses but a song *about* Moses. We have a good instance of hearty praise in the case of this good Centurion. Our Lord *showed* His delight. That is one of the ways in which a little child reminds us of the Kingdom of God. It does not conceal its joy. So Christ *marvelled, turned about* to the people, and not only praised the Centurion but praised him unstintedly. He said it was the finest instance of faith He had ever witnessed.

I read over the Gospels last week and found between fifty and sixty instances of Christ praising people. He did so not only by word, but by act and look. He loved to vindicate people who were despised, like Zacchæus the publican, the woman that was bent double, the woman who anointed Him. He liked to commend people who were dead—like Abraham and John the Baptist. Above all, He liked to commend the Father and the Holy Ghost.

What a lot of commendation people missed! Oh, if any

one had helped Him when before Pilate or on the cross, how much He would have done for that person!

(*Psalms to be sung*—CXXIX.; LXIX. 7-13; XLV. (2nd version) 13-17; XCVIII. 1-4.)

AT HOME WITH THE LORD

'We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.'—2 COR. v. 8 (R.V.).

'Present with the Lord' should be translated '*at home* with the Lord.' When we go to heaven at death we are not like people going to a strange town who wonder if there will be anybody to meet us and how we will know them. We shall have a glimpse of glory before the hour of death. Angels will take charge of our souls. Our friends will receive us, and our forgiven and forgiving enemies. And they 'll introduce us to others. And little children that never knew what it was to enjoy their bodies will perhaps be specially fitted for teaching us how to do without our bodies. And Christ will be there. His soul was separated from His body for a time. During the long interval that precedes the resurrection the soul will be learning its new powers. But in any case we shall be *at home*—among our 'ain folks'—happy and at ease.

(*Psalms to be sung*—XXIII.; XVI. 8-11; LXXI. 7-12; LXXIII. 23-26.)

OCCASIONAL VERSES

THE DAFFODIL

WHEN Mother sets the tablecloth
With all her pretty ware,
The children know she plights her troth—
There 's Dinner in the air.

So all our fears our Father stills
In Springtime's chilly morn,
The God who sends us Daffodils
Will not forget the Corn.

Morning Watch, April 1906.

THE BATTLE OF THE ALPHABET

O ! FOR a wit and power of rhyme,
  Like Browning's or like Lowell's,
To sing of strife there was one time
  'Twixt the Consonants and Vowels.

'We Consonants can stand alone'—
  'Twas thus the strife arose—
'Not so you Vowels, 'tis well known,
  You grant it, I suppose ?

'You see, your very origin
  Is Proletarian,[1]
Whereas a Consonant 's an In-
  Dependent Gentleman.

'A beggar's brat but opes his mouth,
  A *Vowel 's* born straightway !
For *us* must move up, down, north, south,
  Men's jaws, tongues, uvulae.[2]

'B, C, D, F, G, H, J, K,
  L, M, N, P, try Q !
Even R not every one can say ;
  S, T, V, W.

'What thrusts, and checks, and counter-checks,
  Of throat and teeth and lip !
How hard the mysteries of X,
  The powers of Z, to grip !

'And then, just think, when we combine,
  What glory and what greatness !
H.M.,[3] what majesty divine !
  B.Sc.,[4] what sedateness !

'There 's *H.R.H.*,[5] *F.M.*, *K.G.*,
  V.C., and *F.R.S.*,
The trinity of *L.S.D.*
  All worship more or less.

[1] The *Proletarii* in ancient Rome were the poorest of the poor, people with children and no means to support them.

[2] The little thing that hangs down from the roof of the mouth at the top of the throat. [3] His Majesty. [4] Bachelor of Science.

[5] His Royal Highness, Field Marshal, Knight of the Garter, Victoria Cross, Fellow of the Royal Society.

'There 's *K.C.*,[1] *LL.D.*, *D.D.*
(I don't say *they* mean much),
M.P., the people's breath; *Kt.*,
Given by a sovereign's touch.

'*We* are the things men seek to win
By Arms, Arts, Politesse,
For us they even take Medicine—
F.R.C.P. and *S.*[2]

'I meant to add *R.S.V.P.*,[3]
That 's French for *Please Reply*;
But answer cannot easy be,
You 're crushed so thoroughly!

'So here 's my card with *P.P.C.*,[4]
That 's French again! *Good-bye!*
But don't you wish that you were we,
A, E, I, O, U, Y?'

'Oh no!' a Vowel spake forthwith,
'We 're happy as we be,
Though we may lack the grace and pith
Of Z, X, Q, et C.

'Yet each needs each; we form one team;
As well try part asunder
The sun and moon, or lightning's gleam
From crack and crash of thunder.

'But if we part, 'twill not be we
Shall be the most undone;
We can live independently,
You need us, every one.

And great your honours though they be,
I dare make this avowal,
They all come short of the degree
That is of our bestowal.

'You give your honours to the high,
To men of quality,
But every soul that lives in *I*
Claims personality.

[1] King's Counsel.
[2] Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons.
[3] *Répondez s'il vous plait.* [4] *Pour prendre congé*, 'to take leave.'

'Each to himself is always *I*,
Yet always *U* to *U*,
And *U* is *I* unchangeably
When you yourself do view!'

'But what of *O!* the shriek of pain?'
L.S.D. sneering cried,
'And when stuck in between the twain,
Is boasting justified?

'An *I O U* [1]—what is it worth?
The paper it is writ on!
The debtor's sanctuary, no berth
For any honest Briton!

'If all I have *O* takes from me,
I'm utterly bereft!
There 's neither personality,[2]
Nor personalty left!'

'Yes, *I O U* doth humble me,
But *Y, E, A 's* my boast,
And *A, Y, E 's* eternity
Regained, though it was lost.

'Christ is both *A* and *O*,[3] even He
Who is the *Y, E, A*;
He speaketh with authority,
He hateth to say "Nay."

[1] When a man borrows, say, £2 from you, he may give you either a *promissory note*, which needs to be stamped, or else a paper with simply the date and your name and his signature on it and these words: 'I O U Two Pounds.' That is called an I.O.U. These three letters are taken as meaning '*I owe you.*' Two months afterwards he will call on you again, *perhaps* to repay you, more probably to ask for other £5; in which case he will say with a sweet smile, 'And I 'll give you another I O U for it you know,' as if that made it all right.

[2] *Personalty* means money. *Personality* means self-consciousness, the feeling that we have a will of our own, and that we are responsible. Fichte, a German philosopher, made a feast the day his little boy said 'I' for the first time.

[3] Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Rev. xxii. 13. *Omega* means great or long ō, as *Omicron*, little ŏ.

'In Christ is the yea.' 2 Cor. i. 20 (R.V.).

'The things that were against me writ
He nailed them to His cross,
My debt is paid, and I 'm acquit,
My Surety bare the loss.

'*I O* that was the debtor's wail
Is now the ransomed's song;
"Io, Io,"[1] they shout, "All Hail,
Most Mighty and Most Strong!"

'And as they used both sword and trowel
Who built Jerusalem's wall,
Gruff Consonant and homely Vowel
We 're needed, one and all,

'To sing the praises of the King
Who is the First, the Last,
So, ALLELOUIA[3] let us sing!
Our crowns before Him cast!

'The hissing Shibboleths,[4] our pride
On this side Jordan's stream,
Are all, amongst the glorified,
Forgotten like a dream.

'There every note and sound that 's heard
A suckling's lips can frame,
Like *Allelouia* 's every word
They sing before the Lamb.'

Morning Watch, 1905.

TWO ASSES MET

'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.'—ZECH. ix. 9.

Two Asses met on Olivet,
Both old, but one seemed young;
One without speck, and from her neck
Gold bells, silk tassels hung.

[1] 'ĭō ĭō' was the triumphal shout of the Roman soldier, like our *hurrah*.

[2] Nehemiah iv. 17.

[3] So the Greeks spelled the word. Notice how many of the vowels are in it.

[4] Judges xii. 6

And one abused, all cut and bruised
On loins and legs and head,
All sore his back, heavy the pack
With which 'twas burdenèd.

To him spake she: 'Thou seest me—
My master 's kind and good,
I 'm richly dressed, have days of rest,
I feed on angels' food.

'And yet I 'm full of rage, and dule,
And fret, and discontent;
My temper 's quick, I bite and kick,
Unthankful, insolent.

'Your heritage, though twice my age,
Is hunger, toil, and woe;
What makes *you* glad and *me* so sad?
The charm I fain would know.'

This the reply: 'Know then that I
Once bore the Son of God;
It was on me He sat when He
In lowly triumph rode.

'Before that morn I ne'er had borne
Man, load, upon my back;
I longed—yet feared—for I had heard
Stick's blow, and sharp whip's crack.

'And yet I longed! felt I was wronged
Of something meant for me—
Of some great work I dare not shirk
That was my destiny.

'For in His Word we somehow heard—
God put it in my soul—
These words were writ, "Thy King shall sit
Upon an ass's foal."

'My mother smiled; and wept; "My child,"
She said, "such hopes are vain;
For thy manhood waits servitude,
Thy portion shall be pain."

'So we were set where two ways met—
The way ahead so dim!
And even then there spake two men,
"The Lord hath need of him!"

'Quickly we went. Astonishment
Possessed us both outright;
Filled with one thought—What hath God wrought!—
We two came home at night.

'So many years! Yet it appears
One day, since first I saw
Immanuel's face, so full of grace;
Love filled my heart, and awe.

'On her He smiled, then on her child,
Began my neck to stroke,
And thus He said, "Be not afraid,
For easy is Christ's yoke."

'O lightsome load! Strong Son of God!
Thine arm did me uphold,
I carried Thee, Thou carriedst me,
And carriest me now old!

'And I adored the Mighty Lord,
Yet loved Him as was meet;
How could I dare my love declare?
I touched—I kissed—His feet!

'The answering thrill—I feel it still
Though thirty years are gone;
When blows fall thick, cut to the quick
I feel that thrill alone!

'From me, from you, is hid all view
Of what lies death beyond:
Him I'll not see, yet there shall be
One everlasting bond

'Betwixt us both. O I am loath
To die—and no more be—
Yet when I'm dust, surely I must
Live in His memory!

'How could He look upon the Book
Of God's fulfilled decree,
And wear His crown amongst His own,
And not remember me!'

Morning Watch, 1900.

'SHEW ME A PENNY'

'And they asked Him, saying, Master, is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no? But He perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye Me? Shew Me a penny. Whose image and subscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's.' —LUKE xx. 21-24.

'SHOW Me a penny.' So they brought
Him one, of silver made,
Upon whose front a face was wrought,
An Emperor's name displayed.

'Whose face is this, and whose the name?'
'Cæsar's,' was all they said;
To His eyes other faces came,
And other names He read.

Formless and void He saw the earth
Shaping in primal fire;
He saw it coming to the birth
Fulfilling His desire.

He saw the silver and the gold,
The crucibles of stone,
The molten ingots formed of old
By His right hand alone.

His handiwork was in each grain,
His Own the name it bore,
His glory shone in every vein
Of deep-concealèd ore.

Then next He saw Havilah's plain,
And that land's gold was good,
For Earth was yet without a stain,
And sin not understood.

But Man his Maker's image lost,
And all creation groaned;
Came storms, and lightnings, mildew, frost,
Men warred, and prisoners moaned.

They read the proud high-sounding scroll
Of Cæsar's titles. *He*
Heard distant Guadalquivir roll,[1]
Gazed into Araby,

And heard the captive in the mine,
And saw his sweat and blood;
The ore had lost its look divine,
Stamped by the serpent's brood.

He saw just debts by men denied,
The hireling's pay back kept;
No penny but for vengeance cried
Unto a God That slept.

But look! He sees another face,
Name of the unnamed man
Writ on the two pence full of grace
The good Samaritan

Took out for him whom on the way
To Jericho he found,
When Priest and Levite would not stay
To stanch or bind his wound.

He saw the angry glare that burned
Within the evil eye
Of him who to his master turned,
Speaking upbraidingly,

'This last came when the day was done;
Shall he—shall he receive
A penny too, equal with one
Who slaved from morn to eve?'

Again, He saw one in whose hand,
Hire of the Sanhedrin,
Were pieces with the traitor's brand,
The smarting wage of sin.

[1] The Romans got most of their silver from Spain.

The things that time veils and reveals
As in a palimpsest,[1]
He saw Who loosed the seven seals,
Lamb of the piercèd breast.

He sees both after and before,
Both under and above,
Stands in our midst through the closed door,
Omniscient, in love.

Morning Watch, 1898.

THE SNOWDROP

In our garden, underneath a weeping elm tree. the snowdrops appeared generally towards the end of January, followed later by a circle of crocuses. The snowdrops always seemed to stir the poetical afflatus, and there are few February numbers of the *Morning Watch* that don't have some verses in their praise. In February 1911, my husband wrote the following.—A. L. S.

WHEN Bridegroom-like forth came the Sun
To wed the opening Year,
Of Trees, and Shrubs, and Flowers, which one
Did first full-robed appear ?

'Twas not the strong-limbed giant Oak,
Nor blossomed Apple-tree,
That homage paid and welcome spoke
For Earth's nobility.

But if no bough in mead or wood
Brought any offering,
Was there no scented Flower that could
Her pot of incense swing ?

No perfumed Violet awake
In crevice of the rocks ?
No Lily that for Him would break
Her alabaster box ?

Oak, Lily, Violet, Apple-tree—
They slumbered all and slept ;
Alone the Snowdrop patiently
Her loving vigil kept.

[1] A palimpsest was a manuscript from which the writing was washed or scraped off, more or less carefully, in order that the parchment might be used a second time.

And when the cry, 'He comes!' was heard,
  And in the silent camp
No voice replied, no sleeper stirred,
  She trimmed her pendant lamp,

And sallied forth, she that was least,
  And met Him on the road,
First entrant at the Marriage Feast,
  First of the Guests of God!

THE RICH FOOL

'What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?'—LUKE xii. 17.

'WHAT shall I do? My barns are filled;
I'll pull them down, and greater build.'

And Lazarus lying at thy gate,
All sores, content for crumbs to wait!

Canst thou not spare one barley load
For Ruth, who left her land for God?

This widow's meal one hand could hold,
That widow's sons for slaves are sold.

A hundred saints are daily fed
In caves, with Obadiah's bread.

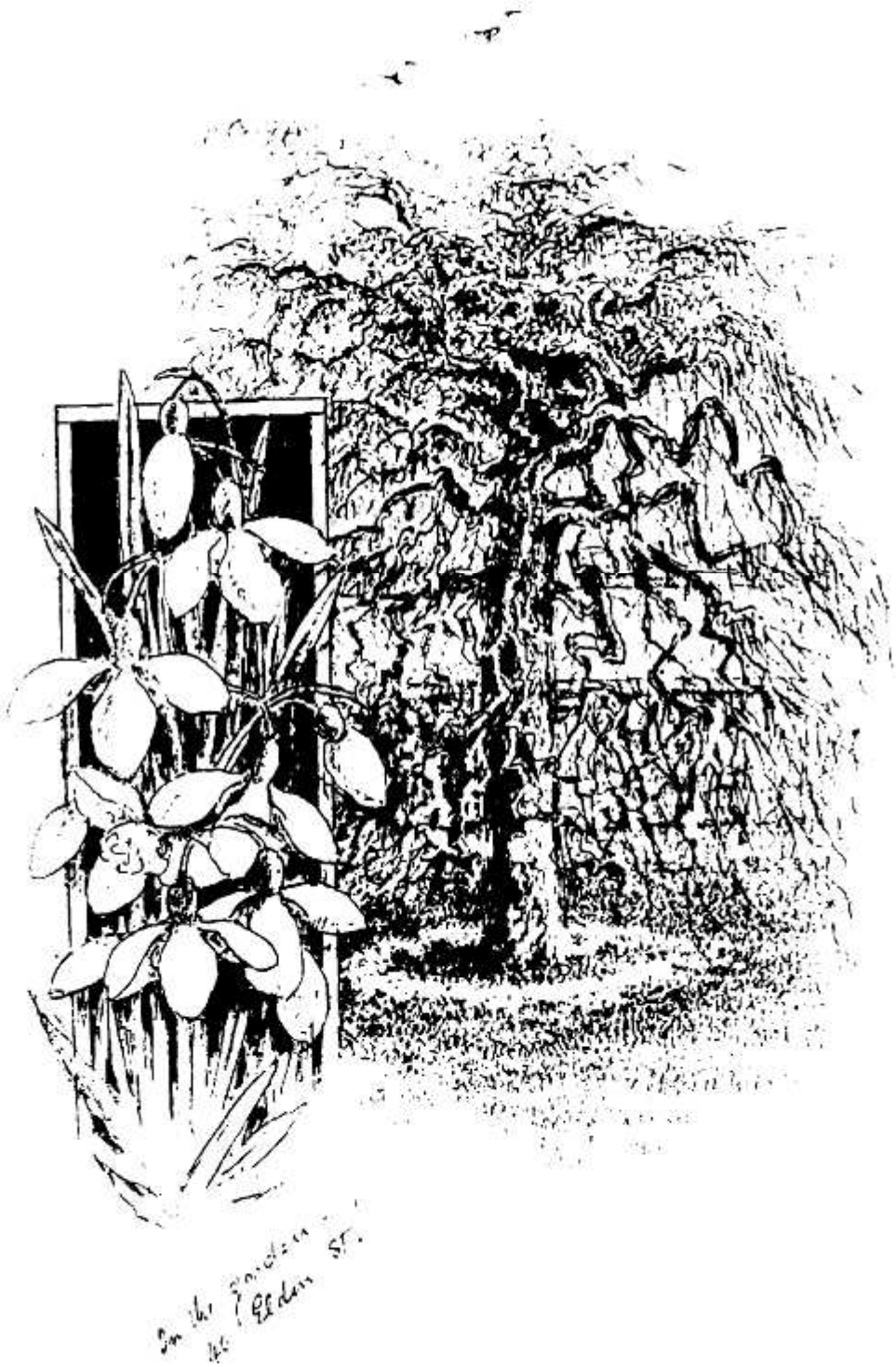
'I have no room.' Oh, idle words,
When men of God are fed by birds!

Didst thou not know the little lad—
Five loaves, two fishes, all he had—

Who gave his store to Christ, and then
Saw fed therewith five thousand men?

O man, the Son, the Christ of God,
Himself walks hungry on the road!

He that spared not the barren tree,
Beware, rich fool, He spare not thee.



'What must I do?' This very night
Awake, and Christ shall give thee light.

Give Him thyself, thy barns, thine all;
The barns of Heaven—*they* are not small.

Morning Watch, 1891.

MY CANDLE

'Our lamps are going out.'—MATT. xxv. 8 (R.V.).
'For Thou wilt light my candle.'—PSALM xviii. 28.

I

My Candle 's spent!
'Tis fit
That I be sad.
Yet am I glad
That ere it went
It lit
Another's.

II

And though men flee
My noisome reek,
I dare avow
That some will seek
And all shall see
The Flame that 's now
Some brother's.

III

And ev'n my candlestick,
Removèd from its place,
Shall get
By grace
Odorous fats, unfailing wick,
And chase
The darkness thick
When set
Upon a stand
By no man's hand,
But by One Other's.

Morning Watch, Dec. 1910.

THE BRAMBLE-BUSH FOR ME!

O THE Bramble-bush is the Poor man's tree,
For it loves the King's high road,
And none dare say, 'It belongeth to me,'
For it roams like the winds of God.
O the Bramble-bush for me!

O the Bramble-bush is the Bairnies' tree,
For it loves to trail on the ground,
And by little or big, whatever you be,
There are berries to be found.
O the Bramble-bush for me!

And the Bramble-bush is like God's own tree,
'Tis a place where dwells Goodwill;
For its thorns are hands that say, 'Come, see,
Eat every one your fill.'
O the Bramble-bush for me!

Morning Watch, October 1906.

CHAPTER XXI

LETTERS

1912–1915

'The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.'

WORDSWORTH.

To Mr. David Wilson, LL.D.

(*His old pupil.*)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Nov. 26, 1912.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,— . . . I was at Mr. Murdoch's funeral. It is forty-seven years since I first met him. He came to teach us in the High School when Dr. MacKinlay, one of the classical masters, was ill. By his introduction of me to your father my whole life was shapen and determined. If he had got some other to go to Stewart Hall you would have been—I do not say a better man—but an even cleverer man than little Mary's father is. His illness was short. He was in church the Sabbath before. He wrote up his diary on the Saturday. The last word in it was his little granddaughter's name 'Jean.'—Hadn't missed a day for over fifty years, and died on the Sabbath morning. He was my oldest living friend.

I was glad you seemed every way stronger and agiler (there 's a new comparative for you !) this autumn. The shadow on my dial has gone forward twelve degrees ; yours has gone backward ten at least. May it stay there !—
Yours ever gratefully, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. W. M. Christie

40 Eldon St., Greenock,
Dec. 7, 1912.

Dear Mr. Christie,—I have been trembling all week lest you should send a sheriff officer to demand delivery of that most interesting letter![1] I omitted the name in reproducing it, lest any of the old lady's friends should come across it. My only way of rewarding any friend who helps me is to punish him by giving him the little volume.

Please give the lady who sent the letter to you one of these volumes and keep the other for yourself for pipe lights. It was a wonderful letter—and I think it was pretty well reproduced by my wife and myself!

Have you ever tried the *Glasgow Herald* with any of your Jewish experiences? You must now and again come across strange things of various interest which lie altogether out of the common track. For the long articles such as appear on Saturdays they give from 25s. to 40s. I have now and again made a few shillings myself out of things which I could not use in my special work. But some of my best things they have rejected! And if you make a fortune out of this, put a clause in your will to the effect that if I had survived you might possibly have left me a slight token of your esteem. No need to acknowledge receipt of this. Our kindest regards to Mrs. Christie, and all good go with you all.—Yours, J. P. Struthers.

To Rev. C. Jerdan

(*On whom the University of Edinburgh was conferring the Degree of D.D.*)

40 Eldon St., Greenock,
April 5, 1913.

My dear Mr. Jerdan,—Hurrah! Hurrah!! Hurrah!!! Hurrah may not be generally looked on as a Biblical word, yet, if I may judge it by the feelings that make me say it, I don't know any word that is more Biblicaller. You see

[1] The letter, which was reproduced in the *Morning Watch*, was 'made' by a woman who could not write, composed of words cut

everything goes by the board, language and grammar alike, so pleased am I. I would need to..gues—new tongues to speak in and with to-day.

The psalm we sang at worship this morning (75th), said, 'Promotion cometh not from the East.' And yet it does. I fear me we shall have to take to human hymns after this! Tell Mrs. Jerdan and your learned son that we are both very, very happy over this.—Yours ever, gratefully, and a great many other ways,

J. P. STRUTHERS.
A. L. STRUTHERS.
J. C. SEALEY.[1]

To Dr. Denney

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
July 30, 1913.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—We had four French Jack Tars of the man-of-war *Lavoisier* in our garden this afternoon. They were passing, and we took them in and set them agoing at gooseberries and the few currants that still remain in hidden corners; we initiated them into golf too, and had a great hour. . . . It is queer work talking with foreigners. We had a French sailor in on Sabbath evening, and I got so enraged at myself for my forgetfulness that I have not had a right sleep since. It is exciting work, and shows what a lot of effort there must be in speech, though we are not conscious of it. . . .

Poor as my vocabulary is in all languages, I am sorry I can still say 'no' on occasion, and must say it to you of all men. It is good and kind beyond words of the Presbytery and you to ask me to speak to the students, but as I was once too young for that, I am now too old. I have aged very greatly this last year or two—a whole decade almost seems to have dropped out of my life—and I am barely fit for the work I must do. My memory plays me many

out of the letter she had received and wished to reply to. These words, along with one or two cut from a newspaper, were gummed on a small sheet of paper.

[1] One of the household, and a devoted member of Dr. Jerdan's congregation.

tricks too. Old men tell me they have had such years, and then they renewed the mid-time of their days—but perhaps that 's simply a symptom of the trouble—and perhaps I too may have a rejuvenescence or a lengthening of my tranquillity (that last clause is not what I wanted to say, but those Frenchies—Rochefort their *habitat*—have put me all wrong).

I am very very glad you are longing to be at the preaching again. You love preaching, and we are all glad it is so. It was nothing but your name in the *Oxford Gazette* that made us fix on going there this summer, and we are glad we went.[1]

After we parted from you we went to London on the Tuesday and left on the Monday.

I spent most of my time in the Law Courts in search of ideas. I was at the Chesterton-Isaacs trial and heard Carson examine Chesterton—an impudent little fellow is Chesterton. I heard Mrs. Pethick Lawrence address Justice Darling and the jury, and certainly never heard more touching pleading. I was in six or seven of the courts, and saw a number of men whose names were familiar to me.

Thanks for all you tell me of your visit to Bath, etc. . . . What a lot of the world I have never seen, and never shall see. Yet the resources of civilisation are not exhausted even here, and there must be some way of reproducing all that 's worth seeing, in the world to come. . . .—Yours,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. James Murray

(Secretary of the National Bible Society of Scotland.)[2]

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Last day of Summer 1913.

MY DEAR MR. MURRAY,—You are a good soul, but your ridiculous generosity has so shattered my faith in your

[1] Professor Denney had been advertised to preach in Mansfield College, June 1913.

[2] J. P. S. had sent his school medals to be sold for the benefit of the Bible Society's funds. Mr. Murray wished to pay £5, and keep them.

perfect mental balance that I am purposing writing to the Directors to advise your instant dismissal, and possibly even your forcible detention in some Home.

On no condition could I consent to your proposal to give £5 for the sorry trash I sent you. Your children would have no respect either for your memory or mine. If any jeweller is willing to give even 10s. or 8s., take it and put down as I said, 'An old man's school medals.'

You have used one of your office receipt forms, too; and how that is to be corrected you and the auditor must settle between you, *but out it must go*!

I wonder your conscience didn't prevent you from putting down such a fib!

It must be spiritual deterioration through long stay in the East.

So take your bill and write 10s., and initial it in your coupon and act like a decent Christian.

I say once more you are a good soul, one of the best of men in Europe or Asia, and you have been kind beyond all words, and you are forgiven on condition of implicit obedience to me.

Don't bother writing an answer. You must be pretty sick of letter-writing. Our kindest regards to Mrs. Murray and the children.—Yours ashamedly but peremptorily,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To an old Greenockian in Canada

Nov. 14, 1913.

DEAR MR. ——,— . . . Happy man to have known Mr. Bowers.[1] I hope you have kept all his letters. They will be of great value. If there is a nice sentence of any kind in any of them that I could make a facsimile of, and reproduce by lithography, it would be a great thing to put in the little *Morning Watch*, with a copy of his signature. Could you trust me with a letter, to be faithfully returned? I have a little letter of Nansen's ordering wood for the

[1] Lieut. Bowers, who perished along with Capt. Scott, returning from the South Pole.

Fram, which I count one of my greatest possessions. I, also, once got a letter from Sir Leopold M'Clintock, the explorer. . . . Thanks again for writing me.—Yours gratefully, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the Rev. James Brown, Glasgow

(After the death of their friend, the Rev. A. D. Grant, Greenock.)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Jan. 28, 1914.

MY DEAR BROWN,—I should have written you much sooner and at great length, for it is to you I owe my friendship with Grant.

He was very fond of you and loved to speak of you. I parted from him at 1.15 on Tuesday. We were both to be at a funeral at 3, and had been talking about our last meetings with people. As we parted he stepped two or three paces back, and said, 'Well, good-bye; I'll meet you again.' Four minutes after, he fell down dead on the little pathway close to the corner of his house. His last text was Is. xxxiii. 17—'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty, they shall behold the land that lieth afar off.' Wasn't that grand? That day on the way home from Balfour's meeting he told me his subject for that evening for the prayer meeting was to be Job xix. 25—'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Our last conversation was a very wonderful one, but it is too long for a letter meantime. I wish Denney would write his life. I hope you have some letters of his. If you have any of his sayings write them down at once.—Yours ever, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. R. S. Allan, LL.D.

(On his retiral from the Chairmanship of the Glasgow School Board.)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
March 10, 1914.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—That was a good letter you sent me—good, and yet it saddens me as it must yourself to think of this as your last month of public life.

I cannot believe it. Will you give a farewell address to the Board? Read a minute like a departing Indian Viceroy of your term of office? Do the public get in on such an occasion? Would poor old Strutters get in?

That 'last month,' and Grant's death, and even Davies-Gilbert's,[1] a lot of other things, all make me feel as if the walls were closing in on one, and the narrow end of the road appearing.

Discerner of Spirits, you were right in divining that it was triumph, not sympathy, I longed for in writing to you about my friend. He was a rare letter-writer. I asked Denney if he would edit a volume of Grant's letters. He fears there is not enough of material. I am hunting up all my friends, and if I get enough I may even edit them myself, making that the work of my life! If I can't get enough of his, I have a lot of Denney's right good ones, and a big bundle of yours, ditto. Then I could publish a volume 'Letters of the friends of J. P. Struthers.' So you may get a little nail in the temple of Fame after all. If you become disagreeable over this, I can easily introduce your name somehow and give some fine notes and pages.

How is this for black-mailing?

Grant's letters are full of all kinds of allusions, and if I could only annotate them as Carlyle did his wife's, you might be proud of me yet, and offer me a blank cheque to put your name in, anyhow, in the third and following editions.

Remember me to Claud and all your household.—Yours ever,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To the friend in Canada who sent some of Lieutenant Bowers' letters

GREENOCK, *May* 12, 1914.

DEAR MR. ——,—This is simply to say that your priceless packet came all right. But I feel inclined to reprimand

[1] Mr. Carew Davies-Gilbert, D.L., who had just died at his residence, the Manor House, Eastbourne, in his sixty-second year, was one of their travelling companions in the East for two months.

you for trusting all these papers to one envelope and one ship! I, myself, would not have lent them to anybody. Your last letter from Lieutenant Bowers, and especially the map, you ought not to have let out of your keeping. The map in particular is a historic document.

I shall be unhappy till I have restored them safely to you. Mrs. Bowers and yourself have been extraordinarily kind in this matter.

I hope to send all back except the one you say I may keep as an autograph. I simply cannot thank you enough, though I reprimand you once more.[1]—Yours ever severely, but gratefully, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Rev. John M'Donald

(*In reply to a request for his views on church seat rents.*)

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Oct. 5, 1914.

MY DEAR MR. M'DONALD,—Our present treasurer, Mr. Matthew Kirkwood, son of Mr. Thomas Kirkwood, was a boy when we did away with seat rents, and has little recollection of the controversy. The treasurer we then had is dead. Mr. M. K. has asked me to answer your questions.

I think it was I, myself, who raised the question.

A phrase I once read in the *Saturday Review* had stuck in my mind. It spoke of Scotch people worshipping God, and asking pardon for their sins 'sitting in seats carefully graduated,' according to the prices they paid—or words like that. It showed me that to a stranger there was something grotesque, if not impious, in 10s. sinners and 2s. sinners so arranging themselves.

Dr. M—— in our town told me that almost every seat in his church was fully let. If a family came, they could get four seats in different parts of the church, and yet on Sabbaths whole seats were empty. On Sabbath evenings the front of the gallery, which has always been the place

[1] A short article on Lieut. Bowers, with a facsimile of a sentence taken from one of his letters, was printed in the *Morning Watch* of July 1914.

of honour, the chiefest seat, for sinners seeking salvation, was absolutely empty because the hour of service was the hour for dinner. Yet these people did not like strangers shown into *their* pews.

I found, as most ministers have found, that if there was a large poor family, they took four seats, and that allowed four in the morning, and four in the afternoon. At least, they made that excuse, apparently honestly. And although the excuse sometimes was insincere, by doing away with seat rents, we rid ourselves of the responsibility of putting that stumblingblock there. Our own rents, I may say, brought us in, I think, £70. They were from 1s. to 4s. the half-year—nay, I think the whole year. We allowed poor widows, etc., to sit in the front narrow uncomfortable seats, for nothing, but they didn't like it.

I remember being shocked by seeing in the seat-letting book, the only time I ever had it in my hand, the names of people in heaven and on earth, good people, with 18s. and 24s. ' arrears ' marked against them. Of course a man may die in debt, but it looked odd in a book about the house of God.

It encouraged, I thought, a feeling of pride. Fine cushioned seats in all the corners, as far from the pulpit as possible, were the dearest, and the people who sat there evidently were thought, and thought themselves, to be superior toffs, and the minister's seat (servant of all) was always the chiefest, often with a table and footstool and all that contributes to pride, ease, and sleep.

Wherever I went I heard people saying—' You see, we can't pay a seat rent.' It seemed odd we should speak of free grace and the welcome of the poorest and the honour done to the widow with only two mites ; yet the cheapest seat was 1s.—forty-eight mites.

I knew of people in our church who asked people to come out of their seats ; that vexed me. I have been refused admission into a seat myself.

I must tell you frankly that my proposal stirred up a lot of noise and bad feeling. Indeed, if you want to know

how cruel and unreasoning your people can be, try to do away with seat rents.

You will be asked if a wife is to be put out of the seat in which her husband, now in glory, sat with her from her marriage day. And if you say nobody is to be put out, and people, if they choose, are just to keep their seats, only they are not to pay a rent for them, you will be told with tears, 'Little did my husband think his wife was to be ordered out of the seat,' etc., etc. You will be asked, as I was at a public meeting, if the church is to be a place of every Tom, Dick, and Harry that chooses to come in.

People will tell you that when they paid a rent they felt they had a right to come in; it was their own place; they felt at home, and it allowed families to sit together. Then there was that blessed 'use and wont' argument, though the use and wont was of very late origin, but use and wont always has a fine sound about it of respect for the good old ways and the pattern shown in the Mount.

People said there would be shifting of seats every Sabbath, every one wanting into the best seats, Bibles going amissing, etc., etc. And how were they to be allocated? Well, when we went to our new church, people just sat where they liked, and we had no disturbance. People are not ashamed to sit in the front seat, because it is just as dear as the back seat, it costs nothing, and doesn't lower one's social status. And what shall we do for the hundred talents? Well, we said if people liked to put a little more into the plate they could do it. Then the opposition triumphantly said, 'Oh, then, we are to pay for our seats after all! Ha! Ha! what's the difference?' And of course people who didn't see the difference couldn't be made to see it. And one man, now dead, said, 'If more money is to be put into the plate, that means more time taken up counting money on the Sabbath day, and the elder and deacon will miss more of the sermon.' To which the answer was easy that, if necessary, and if it was a thing to be regretted, that God gave people grace to be liberal, the money could be counted after the sermon,

or even on the Monday. But that, of course, would have been against use and wont. What about my own seat? Well, my wife sits in the middle of the little side corners along with other two families.

We never missed the money. People put in what they liked, and by God's blessing we have never been in debt. Our collections did increase, but the increase was all voluntary.

But it stirred up strife, and made me enemies to this day, and one or two left the church. I have, nevertheless, never doubted for one instant that seat rents are utterly unjustifiable—contrary to the whole idea of a house of prayer and a throne of grace, and a meeting for the redeemed and those that seek redemption through Christ's Blood.

It got me, too, the name of being domineering and self-willed and new-fangled, but as I got the same names for everything I ever did, or tried to do, I feel that I really did not altogether deserve them, though I dare say there was much sin in the way I went about it.

I have no time to read this over. Yesterday was our Communion day, and I am extra busy this week and very tired and stupid.—Your prolix friend,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Mr. James M'Call

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Nov. 23, 1914.

MY DEAR MR. M'CALL,—

'There thou hast that is thine own'—

with a little usury![1] (£10; 3s. 6d. interest to this day, 25th Nov.)

My wife and I went no holiday this year, and if we are

[1] In early summer 1914, J. P. S. received a bank-book—Greenock Provident Bank—with £10 entered in his name; also a note, with no signature, recommending a holiday. It was not difficult to guess from whom it came, and in the following November the amount was returned with the following letter. The Rev. Mr. Gourlay had been on holiday in the Austrian Tyrol, and had been interned for the first three months of the war.

spared shan't be going next year. And I have no doubt after what happened to your own minister you are very glad we did not go. If we had been interned, the very least for material and moral damages that we would have claimed would have been £500 for me, and £400 for my wife, in all £900, less five per cent. for immediate payment. But as I don't think I could have been as peaceable a captive as Mr. Gourlay, I should probably have been shot, in which case you would have had to pay to my congregation for pulpit supply, etc., £100, and to my wife £3000, less 5 per cent. as before.

This bank-book business has been a unique thing altogether, and it will be, I doubt not, a bonnie item in what Paul calls 'your account,' and it will bring you much more than three per cent. My wife and I can never thank you enough, and we both congratulate you again on the narrow escape you have had from the lawyer's clutches !—
Yours ever gratefully, J. P. STRUTHERS.

To Sir William Ramsay [1]

40 ELDON ST., GREENOCK,
Jan. 6, 1915.

DEAR K.C.B.,—I have no right to be believed, but it is true all the same that it was the goodness and the kindness of your last letter to me that kept me from answering it. It was one of the great letters of my life; I read some choice bits of it the Sabbath after to my Bible class. But instead of sitting down and thanking you for it in simple words, I thought I should try to write worthily of it, and waited in the hope that the genius of correspondence might throw a corner of her mantle (if the genius is a *she*) over me some sunshiny day. I should have gone and waited at her door and not looked for her to wait at mine. And so

[1] This letter was found in Sir William Ramsay's copy of the last volume of the *Morning Watch* (1914), where it had been very carefully attached to the fly-leaf by Sir William, along with a little note of my husband's death. While giving invaluable help to his country, and in close touch with France in getting chemicals necessary for war purposes, Sir William was laid low by an illness which proved fatal.

I have lost my chance of immortality. For had I answered it like a gentleman I might have got another, and when your biographer should get from my executors' executors two or three letters of yours, he would say—'I must put in this man's name, Strutchers, or whatever it is; there must surely have been something in him when Lord Ramsay wrote such letters to him.' Ah, me!

My greatest companion, hereabouts, a Mr. Grant, a U.F. minister, died in a moment eleven months ago, three minutes after I had parted with him one day, and as I was his and his wife's sole surviving trustee I had a good deal to do I was not prepared for. I hoped further to write a little book about him. He was reckoned by men like Principal George Adam Smith, Drs. Stalker and Denney, one of the best and strongest men they knew; a sayer of good things, a man of fine taste, and full of humour; and a charming letter-writer. I had often asked him to write a book. He couldn't travel a mile without adventure, or utter a sentence without at least three felicities in it, if the sentence were long enough to render that possible. But he was as timid and bashful as a lassie of fifteen, and never printed anything but one or two letters to our local paper. One day I begged and begged him to begin—to write about anything—anything. I almost wept in my eagerness and said, 'Oh, man, you could write a great book.' He blushed all over, and I said, 'I say so deliberately.' 'Yes,' he said, 'but there is such a thing as a deliberate lie!' All who knew him regret bitterly they kept no notes of his talk. I spent every spare moment till the war began interviewing his people, copying letters, etc., but I fear there is not enough matter to make a book that would honour him—and incidentally as a by-product—myself and any who like me. And that chance of fame is gone too. I daren't ask either you or Lady Ramsay to forgive me, and I must go down to the vile dust from whence I sprung, unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. Oh dear! dear Sir William, and I might have been yours in some aspects,

J. P. STRUTHERS.

In the last week of his life my husband heard of the very serious illness of his brother's widow in Glasgow. He went to see her, and found her awaiting death very calmly, trusting in the Heavenly Father's care for herself and for her young daughters. The following letter he wrote to one of the latter on the morning of Saturday, January 16. It must have been his last.

Apparently well and happy, preparing for the Sabbath services, and finding much pleasure in his subjects, he spent the whole of that Saturday, one believes, just as he would have spent it had he known that he was to be called on the morrow from the service of the earthly sanctuary to the Courts of God's own House. eternal in the Heavens.

To Miss M. Struthers

(*His Niece.*)

Saturday.

MY DEAR MAGGIE,—I hope Mother has had a great measure of relief and freedom from pain. We were greatly vexed we did not know sooner how ill she was. Send us a wee note now and again. . . .

I hope you and Annie will manage to go to church at least once a day. It brings a blessing with it. When our Lord was on earth we are told He *always* went, and he must have heard many poorer sermons than even we do. You won't be angry at my urging you both to do so. It is fine when two sisters, like the two brother Apostles Andrew and Peter, lead each other to Christ. And Christ is a good Master and Friend.

I was very happy to see you both looking so well, and I took it very, very kind of Annie going with me to the station. Our love to you all and Mrs. Mackay, and *please* let me know if there is anything your mother would like. And may God be with us all in these solemn days.—Yours affectionately,

J. P. S.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MASTER'S CALL

'Now I further saw that betwixt them and the gate there was a river, but there was no bridge to go over, and the river was very deep.'—BUNYAN'S *Pilgrim's Progress.*

'There is no Death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.'—LONGFELLOW.

IN the latter half of 1914, when the dread shadow of war was falling with ever deepening gloom upon our land, there were some among my husband's friends who had noticed in him signs of failing strength, but to those who were always near him these had not been evident. His mind seemed to be as alert as ever, and his activities even greater. Indeed, he had himself remarked at the close of the year that the days had never seemed to be so fully occupied.

That the war lay ever heavily on his heart was easily seen. Our soldiers were ever in his thoughts. In every prayer, whether in public worship or in private, even when asking a blessing at meal-time, they and the sailors were never forgotten. What he could do for them in any way he did. Writing to his friend, the Rev. A. C. Gregg, he said :—

I hope the war cloud will lighten. I, myself, would willingly be a special constable, or clerk (if they would accept my handwriting), or wheel a barrow to make fortifications,

and would have no scruple in taking the oath. It can only have one meaning in times of invasion.'

In the last complete number of the *Morning Watch* (January 1915) he wrote :—

" At this present time God's judgments are abroad upon our land and over Europe. Everywhere there are Rachels weeping for their children ; wives and lovers, from whom the light of their lives is, as it were, gone out ; boys and girls asking for their fathers who are lying dead in a foreign land and in an unknown grave. It is quite possible there may be some of us who have suffered nothing from the war but a little inconvenience, the payment of a few subscriptions, or the increased price of flour and ham. It may be even that some of our friends have got a better situation or a rise in wages through the war. To all such and to ourselves who may be taking things too easily, I would repeat Mordecai's words—' Think not with thyself thou shalt escape more than all the Jews.' Let us who dwell in peace, when others are in sackcloth and ashes, beware lest God drive us from before Him into shame and everlasting contempt. If we lose no friends in battle we shall have to drink of our brethren's cup—for we are all sharers in our nation's sin—we shall have to know the fellowship of our Lord's suffering in some other way. And in years to come, when people say to us, ' How many friends did you lose in the Great War ? ' we shall have to answer, ' I didn't suffer that way, but I had other trials, and worse than that.' It is a very awful thought, but it is true, that to every one of us, some way or other, 1914-1915 will be a year the very thought of which will make our hearts heavy and cold as lead. O God, rebuke us not in Thine anger, neither chasten us in Thy hot displeasure. Grant that the fiery trial that awaits each one of us may come straight from Thine Own loving hand. And in that dread hour may none of us dishonour Thee, or grieve Thy good Spirit, the Holy Ghost. And all this we ask for the sake of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ. Amen."

My husband often talked of death, wondering when it would come, and how—not gloomily, but, as Charles Kingsley regarded it, 'with reverent curiosity.' He thought it right to accustom oneself to the thought of it. Very frequently such passages as the following occurred in his letters :—

"I hope when death comes we shall fear no evil, and that we shall be together till the very last, conscious, calm, and loving."

"I would like to die on a Sabbath day, or on a week-day after preaching. I would like to be inviting sinners to come to God to the last hour of my life."

"It must be dreadful for a husband and wife to part, especially if they have no little ones. I hope God will be with us both and let us be with one another when death comes (when will it be? and how will it be?), and that when we part, it will be joyfully in His love, knowing that the one who goes away is going to the fullest happiness, and that the one who is left will follow in a little."

"I have often thought I would like to die on the Sabbath day, and if it were God's will, that I might be preaching to the very last."

And God granted him literally the desire of his heart.

On Sabbath, January 17, 1915, he gave the address at the Morning Fellowship Meeting, choosing for his subject 'The Adverbs of the Bible.' In the forenoon he lectured, as was his custom, on a chapter, the one coming in ordinary course that day being the 33rd of Deuteronomy—Moses' farewell blessing to the Tribes. In Joseph's blessing the words occur—'the goodwill of Him who dwelt in the bush.' My husband said :—

"Moses was about to die and the remembrance of God's presence and promise on that far-off day in the desert seems to have come into his thoughts; and so will it be with us.

God will doubtless put into our minds when going down into the dark valley words of promise and comfort which we have learned long ago."

With these prophetic words he closed, repeating twice over, with great earnestness, 'God's will is goodwill, God's will is goodwill.'

In the afternoon his text was—'God, who giveth liberally,' and as he spoke of God's delight in 'giving,' the angel messenger came and sealed his lips. His prayer—'I hope I may preach to the very last'—was granted.

In the hours of partly returning consciousness there was no suffering—only utter weakness, which forbade all converse, but the prayers he murmured from time to time, and the request, 'Sing me a Psalm,' showed where his soul's anchor was cast. The night passed not altogether unrestfully. Our hopes were greater than our fears. But he was to have 'another morn than ours.' The shadows of the Valley were not dark, and the waters of the River were very low, and or ever those who watched were aware, it had been crossed, and the servant had entered into the Presence of the King.

And devout men carried their minister to his burial. On January 21 his elders and deacons, some of them having companied with him from the beginning, and some having grown up from childhood under his care, bore him into the church, which was filled to overflowing with a silent company, and reverently laid the coffin on the Communion Table at which he had so often broken the Bread of Life.

Psalms he loved were sung—the 103rd, 13-17, the 20th, 1-5, the 73rd, 23-26—the familiar words falling like a benediction on the heart.

Ps. ciii. 13-17.

Such pity as a father hath
Unto his children dear,
Like pity shews the Lord to such
As worship Him in fear.
For He remembers we are dust,
And He our frame well knows.
Frail man, his days are like the grass,
As flow'r in field he grows.

For over it the wind doth pass,
And it away is gone;
And of the place where once it was
It shall no more be known.
But unto them that do Him fear
God's mercy never ends;
And to their children's children still
His righteousness extends.

Ps. xx. 1-5

Jehovah hear thee in the day
When trouble He doth send;
And let the name of Jacob's God
Thee from all ill defend.
Oh let Him help send from above,
Out of His sanctuary;
From Zion, His own holy hill,
Let Him give strength to thee.

Let Him remember all thy gifts,
Accept thy sacrifice:
Grant thee thine heart's wish, and fulfil
Thy thoughts and counsel wise.
In thy salvation we will joy;
In our God's name we will
Display our banners: and the Lord
Thy prayers all fulfil.

Ps. lxxiii. 23-26.

Nevertheless continually,
O Lord, I am with Thee:
Thou dost me hold by my right hand,
And still upholdest me.
Thou, with Thy counsel, while I live,
Wilt me conduct and guide;
And to Thy glory afterward
Receive me to abide.

Whom have I in the heavens high
But Thee, O Lord, alone?
And in the earth whom I desire
Beside Thee there is none.
My flesh and heart doth faint and fail,
But God doth fail me never:
For of my heart God is the strength
And portion for ever.

Thanks were offered and gratitude expressed to the Heavenly Father for the gift of His servant, for the ministry of love that had been so freely given, for the gracious memories that would abide.

Then he was borne, accompanied by a sorrowing crowd, to God's Acre on the hill, beautiful for situation, where the Greenock folk lay their dead to rest.

In 1891, at the time of his father's illness and death, my husband had written :—

Feb. 5.

" It is probable I 'll have to buy a grave soon. It will be my first possession. I wish you could have helped me to choose it. It may mean more to both of us than we can at present imagine.

Feb. 25.

"My father died to-night. . . . I shall go to-morrow and buy a grave. I think it should be in a quiet spot—if one can get that. I hope all his prayers will be answered and that God will forgive me for all my sins against him."

Feb. 27.

"I bought a grave to-day for him and for —— our God only knows. It is against a high wall covered with ivy and with rhododendron trees beside it. A restful little spot near the main road, and yet in a quiet path off it. I pulled two ivy leaves, one for my mother and one for you."

The ivy leaf is still green. It lies between the pages of a Bible, resting on the words—'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.'

Into that grave the coffin was lowered as into a green nest, for it had been lined with fresh laurel. The 23rd Psalm, of hallowed associations, was sung, the plaintive tune of 'Orlington,' mingling strangely with the sharp crack of rifles, as men on the opposite hill-side prepared for the deadliest war the world had ever seen; and again thanks were given.

The darkness of a winter's day was falling, but it was not altogether dark. The sunlight was still catching the Argyllshire hills, colouring their snow-covered summits with crimson. The moon was calmly rising in the east, clear and cold. Bearing the message of a new-born life, the snowdrops were bursting through the dark mould. Into the hearts of those who mourned there entered a great peace, mingled with a strange feeling of exultant consolation as they remembered in their loss what they had possessed. And it was in very sure hope they laid the labourer to rest, for has not the Master said, 'Where I am, there shall also My servant be'?

The Resting Place —
"Until the day break
And the shadows flee away."

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